DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 632 CS 010 555

AUTHOR Nichols, G. Jeane
TITLE Helping Parents Help Their Children Toward Literacy.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 147p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beginning Reading; Kindergarten; *Kindergarten Children; *Parent Participation; Parent Responsibility; *Parent Role; Parents as Teachers; Parent School Relationship; Parent Student Relationship; *Parent Teacher Cooperation; Primary Education; *Reading Readiness; Teacher Improvement
IDENTIFIERS Emergent Literacy; Family Literacy; Literacy Events

ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to help parents of kindergartners in a low income area help their children develop literacy. The primary goal was to secure the active involvement of parents in their children's learning experiences. Other goals included improving kindergarten teachers' communication skills and expanding their strategies for reaching out to parents, and building a network of support for children by linking the resources of the home, school, and community. A needs assessment survey and a parent contract were administered to parents, the interests and needs of participating parents and the time commitment they preferred were determined, orientation and Parent Help Sessions (PHS) were planned and conducted for parents and teachers, resource people were recruited to assist with presentations that required specific skills to meet parents' and teachers' needs, and evaluation components were developed and administered. Results indicated that the PHS, the classroom and school visits, and participation were positive experiences for parents and teachers. Parents indicated that the training, classroom and school visits, and home activities enabled them to help their children at home. Of the 80 parents, 75 made significant progress through active involvement in helping their children toward literacy. (Nine tables of data are included and 67 references are attached. Appendixes include interview questions, Chapter 1 parent involvement survey, frequency distribution data, parent contract, PHS topics checklist, activities calendars, sign-in sheet, classroom registry, home contract form, parent session attendance roster, questionnaires, certificate of involvement, and notice for PHS.) (MG)

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# Helping Parents Help Their Children Toward Literacy

Submitted by
G. Jeane Nichols
Cluster 31

A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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Approved:

May 3, 1991
Date of Final Approval of Report

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Acknowledgements

The writer gratefully acknowledges the following people for their contributions to the success of this practicum: Her sister, Jerry L. Nichols Scott, for always being there, when needed.

Her secretary, Margie Strange, for her patience, perseverance, and excellent skills in preparing and presenting this report.

The principal, Shirley George Culbert, for her desire and dedication to make the practicum school a better place to learn and live for children, the community, parents, and teachers.

The teachers, Sandra Bunn, Valerie Hall, Jereldene Jelks, and Carolyn Middleton, for caring enough to reach out to parents for their help and involvement in their children's learning.

The parents, all 80 of them, for giving of themselves with concerns, determination, talents, time, and sincerity to become actively involved in helping their children toward literacy.

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## Abstract

Helping Parents Help Their Children Toward Literacy. Nichols, G. Jeane, 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Parent Role/Parent Involvement/Parent School Relationship/Parent Training/Parent Volunteers/Home-School Communication/Kindergarten Education/Literacy/Literacy Development.

This practicum was designed to help parents of kindergartners in a low income area help their children develop literacy. The primary goal was to secure the active involvement of parents in their children's learning experiences. A second aim was to improve kindergarten teachers' communication skills and expand their strategies for reaching out to parents. The third aim was to build a network of support for children by linking the resources of the home, the school, and the community.

The writer administered a needs assessment survey and a Parent Contract to parents; determined interests and needs of participating parents and the time commitment they preferred; planned and conducted orientation and Parent Help Sessions (PHS) for parents and teachers; Recruited resource people to assist with presentations that required specific skills to meet parents' and teachers' needs; supervised and maintained the program; and developed and administered evaluation components.

The results of the practicum were favorable. Analysis of the data revealed that the PHS and the classroom and school visits and participation were positive experiences for parents and teachers. Parents indicated that the training, classroom and school visits, and home activities enabled them to help their children at home. Of 80 parents, 75 made significant progress through active involvement in helping their children toward literacy.


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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## Description of Work Setting and Community

This practicum will be implemented in an urban community with a total population of 218,000 -- 47% black, 52% white, and 1% other races. Located along a popular river in the southern part of the United States, the community got its name from a riverboat captain whose trading and Indian interpreter skills brought merchants and settlers to the area. The name given to the local district is attributed to its first settlers and traders -- the Indians. The Indians gave the rich river land to their interpreter, the Captain. The Captain sold the land to a group of wealthy men. Those men formed a town company which was later incorporated as a city in 1839.

From its bartering beginning, this community has grown into the hub of activities, commercially and socially, for its tri-state area. Its location, desirable climate, navigable river, timber supply, productive soil, and good business management have aided in its growth and stability (Nichols, 1989, p. 1).

The community now has quality provisions in (a) transportation - rail, major highways, bus carriers, interstate common carriers, and major airlines; (b) communication -- United States Postal Services, United Parcel Services, Federal Express, Bell Telephone, Western Union, Cablevision services, and the three national television networks; (c) medical services--a state medical care and training center, seven major hospitals and more than three hundred doctors, nurses and paraprofessionals in general and specialized fields; (d) protection of civil rights, life and property -- a trained police force, a large field of legal and judicial professionals, appropriate elected officials, and one of the world's largest military bases; (e) recreation -- several lakes for fishing and water sports, parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and stadiums, bicycle and walking trails, and musical and theatrical performing arts groups; (f) housing -- privately owned residential and government supported housing; (g) religious offerings -- 346 Protestant churches, 11 Catholic churches, two Jewish Synagogues and one Greek Temple; and (h) education -- Head Start Program, licensed day care centers, two private colleges, two branches of state universities, and numerous private and public elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, a few parents teach their own children in local and state approved Home Study Programs (Communities

Economic Development Foundations, 1988).

The local public school system was established in 1877. The school district encompasses 889 square miles of territory. The 1990-91 district budget is $213,747,492. Funding for the system comes from a variety of sources which include (a) Equalization Fund: Minimum Foundation Program (MFP), in which the state appropriates funds to each school system according to student enrollment to provide for salaries, textbooks, programs, transportation, materials, and supplies; (b) local property taxes; (c) local sales taxes; (d) local interest on investments; and (e) federal funds provided by Public Law 94-142, Chapter I, Chapter II, and School Food Service.

The public school system is the largest of the local educational institutions with 51,222 children enrolled in its 76 schools - - Gateway Gifted (three years old) to grade 12. The school system is also the largest local employer with 6,000 employees. A 12 member school board is the governing body for the school system with business conducted in opened regular sessions the first and third Wednesdays of each month in the Board Room of the Administrative Center (Central Office).

The administrative Center is the hub for the educational work force in this community. Housed within this building are the persons

responsible for providing leadership, assistance, and guidance for the system's employees who are directly (and indirectly) responsible for making each day the best learning day possible for all of the children enrolled in the school system's schools.

The staff is as diversified as the four divisions forming its organizational pattern - Administrative Services, Curriculum and Instruction, Human Resource Services, and Support Services. There are blacks, whites, certified, classified, low socio-economic, middle class, old, young, novices, and veterans among the group of approximately 250 staffers. As diversified as this group is, the roles and responsibilities are much the same as you would find in any medium-to-large size school system or corporation.

Its uniqueness lies in the quality, dedication, and determination of its workers. In a system that has been under one consent decree or another since 1973, a city periodically torn by racial conflict, a state strangling from economic woes, and a nation grasping for reform after reform, the school system continues to progress. Some of its recent accomplishments include (a) two nationally acclaimed high schools; (b) two nationally acclaimed middle schools; (c) three nationally recognized teachers-of-the year; (d) one high school

representing the state in the national decathlon for the past five years and obtaining national rankings between fifth and tenth for each of those years; and (e) an increase in California Achievement Test (CAT) scores the last six years. In spite of these surrounding woes, staffers find ways to "work it out" and "work together: in positive and productive styles (Nichols, 1989, pp. 3-4).

## Writer's Work Setting and Role

This practicum will be conducted in one of the 51 public elementary schools in the city. The actual setting will be four kindergarten classrooms with a total enrollment of 80 students. The classrooms have been classified as Chapter I using the qualifying criteria of family economic status (which also determines free or reduced lunch eligibility) and results from the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery as mandated by the 1985 State Legislative Act 146 (that all kindergarten students be screened within thirty days before or after entry). The results from the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery are used as a diagnostic tool for instructional planning by the classroom teacher.

The classrooms are four of the 34 classrooms in a Chapter 1 School with an enrollment of 662. Instruction is provided for pupils from Early

Childhood Education (ECE) to grade five. The school is a predominately black school with 657 black students and 5 white students. The racial make-up of the faculty is 20 blacks and 14 whites. From ECE (four year olds) to grade three, the average class size is 20 while in grades four and five, the average class size is 24.

This rapidly growing neighborhood elementary school is located in a predominately black low socio-economic area of the community. It is bordered by growing commercial and medical districts on its east and south sides. One of the city's largest hospitals is located across the street from the school. The neighborhood concept prevails with most of the students living within one mile or walking distance of the school. Approximately 80 of the students ride two buses to school.

The school is one of the oldest facilities in the school system. One-third of the school is a three-story structure (22 classrooms and the cafeteria) that was built in 1924, however, because of continuous supervision, appropriate maintenance, 1989 renovation, and excellent custodial care, it is in good condition both inside and out. Another one-third of the school (eight classrooms, multi-purpose room, counselor's office, teachers' lounge, work room, and principal's office) was rebuilt in 1989 because of a fire that destroyed it in 1987. The other one-third of

the school (2 classrooms; library, and the 840 capacity auditorium) is two separate one story structures that were not damaged in the fire. The auditorium was built as a part of the original structure in 1924. The library and the two adjoining classrooms were built in 1965 as a part of the school system's extension of on-site library services to all elementary schools and the beginning of the district-wide kindergarten program.

During the two years (1987-89) following the fire, the school was relocated in a vacant school on the east side of the community. Coincidentally, this site was also across the street from a major hospital. All students were provided bus transportation to the temporary site by the school system.

The school reopened in its new and renovated home site at the beginning of the 1989-90 school session. The architects and contractors did an excellent job of matching the new buildings with the old structure in design and color. The new buildings complement the old structure, blending to make a stately picturesque scene which is a source of pride for the community.

The old community in which the school is located has changed. Older white families have moved out or are deceased. New and younger black families with children are moving in and bringing with them an increase in

the school's enrollment. During the 1989-90 school year, the enrollment increased from 465 to 662.

Many of the parents of these students are low income workers, with most jobs in the area of domestic labor. Many are single parents (mostly mothers, however, some are grandparents). A few of these parents receive assistance through welfare benefits.

Four teachers, two aides, a parent service leader, the principal, coordinator, supervisor, and director make up the professional work force responsible for the academic growth of these pupils. Each of these professionals is involved mainly according to job description:

1. The teachers provide developmentally appropriate instruction and guidance for students.

2. The aides, working under the supervision of the teachers, assist in providing appropriate instruction and guidance for the students.

3. The parent service leader assists the teachers with the delivery of Chapter I services such as home visits, health and medical provisions, materials, supplies, and periodic parent workshops.

4. The principal provides leadership, guidance, and support for staff and students. She promotes and maintains a wholesome and safe learning environment for staff and students.

5. The supervisor observes, monitors, and assists the staff in developing curriculum and providing wholesome and appropriate teaching - learning situations.

6. The director provides overall directions relative to appropriate curriculum, materials, practices, and techniques for the teaching - learning situation.

"As Director of Elementary Education, it is the writer's responsibility to ensure that the delivery of services (listed in the preceding paragraph) is provided and presented (by the school staff [teacher, aide, and principal] and by the supervisory staff) in meaningful and appropriate ways in order to promote the development of the learning potential of all students" (Nichols, 1989, p. 7).

The writer serves as one of the system's two directors of elementary education. This position has the major responsibilities of administering the elementary school program -- by developing the curricula and programs; supervising principals and instructional supervisors; and providing inservice training for principals, coordinators, teachers, and administrators.

In the area of planning the curriculum and the instructional program, the writer relies on past experiences, background training,

expertise of principals and supervisory staff, research, and promising practices. Background training includes study and certification in the areas of elementary education; special education with a specialty in mental retardation; kindergarten education; supervision of student teaching; reading specialist; elementary principalship; supervisor; and superintendent.

Past professional responsibilities and experiences provide the writer with some practical and proven techniques from which to draw. Those experiences include first grade teacher, curriculum coordinator, elementary principal, supervisor of elementary education, and currently, director of elementary education for the past seven years (Nichols, 1989, p. 8).

In addition to positional experiences, the writer has been involved in extensive curriculum planning and development. Some of those include reading adoptions and management programs, proposal writing, reading prescriptive tests development, handwriting bulletins, language arts management guides, and parental information brochures.

Promoting and maintaining high morale among workers is another important role. Knowing how to work well with people is essential in getting people to work well for you. The writer obtained positive people

skills in all of the responsibilities listed earlier. Additionally, working in leadership roles in related organizations contributed much to becoming skilled in working with people. From the many privileged opportunities to serve and lead others, the writer believes the most significant ones were (a) chairperson of the Branch YWCA; (b) second and first Vice-President of the local Girl Scout Council; (c) Area Vice-President and President of the local education association; (d) Vice-President-elect, Vice President, and President of the State Reading Association; (e) member of the Editorial Advisory Board for The Reading Teacher - the elementary journal of the International Reading Association; and Vice-President of the Board of Directors for the Youth Enrichment Program (YEP) - a local latch-key program for elementary children.

# CHAPTER II

# STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

## Problem Description

Why don't some children learn to read and write? What could you do with children who come to school without an understanding of the concepts to reading and writing? How could you motivate children to be literate, if literacy was not a high priority in their out-of-school environment? How could you involve parents in their children's learning (Cunningham, 1986, p. 82)?

"Most educators agreed that parents play a central role in their children's education. As a result, there was a growing awareness that the home and school needed to form a partnership to ensure a successful educational experience for children" (Granowsky, Middleton, & Mumford, 1979, p. 826).

It was important to note, however, that in spite of mounting evidence in support of parent-involvement schemes, there were still some schools that had not become actively involved in the planning or the practice.

Unfortunately, one of those "uninvolved" schools was the setting for this practicum, which was:

1. A school where parental involvement in the teaching/learning activities of their young children was very limited.

2. A school with which most parents seldom communicated.

3. A school in which most of the parents really did not know how important they were to their children's learning success.

4. A school in which the "traditional methods" used to involve parents and acquire their support were not working. These traditional approaches included (a) one way communication from school to parent, usually in writing; (b) threats of potential student punishment or failure as a means to stimulate parent action; and (c) developing mechanisms for parent involvement (such as Parent Teacher Association [PTA] offices and council memberships) that appealed to parent pride and desire for status" (Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1988, p. 108).

As a means of obtaining a "close-up" description of the problem, the writer visited the school and conducted personal interviews with the principal, coordinator, and kindergarten teachers to collect the data.

Parental communication and involvement were described by each of the educators in a variety of ways, with most of their opinions describing attitudes and behaviors that called attention to and expressed concern for "poor home - school relation". They described parents who (a) seldom visited

the school to observe and/or discuss their children's progress, (b) did not respond to information or materials sent home, (c) did not attend scheduled conferences or return teachers' telephone calls, (d) did not volunteer to help with school activities, (e) did not belong or attend PTA meetings, and (f) did not reinforce the activities taught at school.

As the old saying goes, "seeing is believing". The writer used that advice and planned a variety of visits to the school at seven specific times which included (a) the beginning of the school day, (b) recess time, (c) lunch time, (d) afternoon class period immediately after lunch, (e) assembly program, (f) end of school day, and (g) a PTA meeting.

During each of the visits, the writer observed that few, if any, parents or community people were in the school or on the school grounds. The writer did notice however, that during the periods at the beginning and end of the school day about 50 parents "came in and went out" (without spending more than five minutes in the school) to either drop off or pick up small children - and most of them were in the ECE.

There were approximately six volunteers working in classroom assistance activities on two occasions. There were no volunteers helping at recess, lunch time, or during afternoon class period.

The attendance at the assembly program was fair with about 30 parents

there. PTA attendance was very poor with only ten parents in attendance and five of those were officers.

Some teachers seemed to view the limited parental involvement very nonchalantly. It did not really matter as a couple of them said, "It just might have been for the best." With those teachers, this was their way of school life - not going that extra mile to get parents involved.

In spite of the attitude of a few teachers, the principal and most teachers had worked continuously to improve parent-school communication and cooperation. They had utilized a variety of traditional approaches (described on page 13) to involve parents and acquire their support, however these approaches had not been successful.

The principal and teachers had not targeted the most important people - parents -in (or as a part of) their planning, development, or implementation. They had not involved parents in their studies or strategies to improve home-school relations. They had omitted the primary source needed to spark their involvement drive - the only source that could place this relationship in forward gear.

After visiting with the principal, coordinator, and teachers; talking with parents; and reviewing school and PTA records, it was evident that these parents (a) had had limited involvement in their children's learning

experiences at home and at school, (b) wanted to help their children but did not know how, and (c) were interested in being involved in school activities but felt that they did not know what to do.

This practicum focused on these parents while addressing the problem: some parents of beginning readers, despite a desire to be helpful, did not know how to effectively support their children's literacy development.

## Problem Documentation

While implementing Practicum I, the writer became concerned as she observed the very limited involvement of some parents in their children's learning experiences. With the principal's approval and help, the writer randomly selected and interviewed 10 low-income parents of kindergarten children at that practicum site. Ten of the 10 parents stated that they wanted to help their children but they did not know how to help them. Those parents asked for help. They expressed their willingness to be trained how to help their children. They also expressed their desire to be involved in school activities but felt that they did not know what to do.

To find out how significant the problem was at the proposed Practicum II site, the writer interviewed (by telephone) 20 of the 80 kindergarten parents (see Appendix A for interview questions). Of the 20 parents, 15

stated that they wanted to help their children but were not sure that they knew how. Three of the 20 parents stated that they tried to help when they had the time. Only two stated that they always helped their children and that they also knew how to help them. All of the parents stated that they were interested in learning how to help their children, including the two who earlier stated that they already knew how to help.

"In order to focus in on the problem, the writer began a series of inquiries. The Chapter I Department of the school system was the most logical place to start because of the many services it rendered to low-income kindergartners" (Nichols, 1989, p. 19). Two of these services were in the area of planning and assessment. The Chapter I Department conducted a parental involvement survey and a needs assessment each year.

The parent survey (see appendix B) was sent to approximately 1,500 kindergarten parents across the school district including 40 of the proposed practicum parents. A review of the survey results of the proposed practicum parent showed that only 20 of them returned the survey. Of the 20 (a) eleven stated that they were regularly informed about school activities; (b) twenty stated that they were interested in activities to do at home with their children; and (c) fifteen stated that they were interested in meeting with other parents. The three top topics selected for further

parent meetings were (a) how to make and use instructional games for use at home, (b) how to read to your child, and (c) how to arrange an effective parent-teacher conference.

The results of the Needs Assessment Survey returned by 106 Chapter I kindergarten teachers was not new. Kindergarten teachers had consistently listed two areas of need for the last five years (1985-1990). The two areas of need and the years those needs were listed are presented in Table I.

Table 1
Parental Needs Related to Reading

| Years | Exposure to Literature | Parental Involvement in Reading Readiness Activities |
|---|---|---|
| 1985-86 | 90% | 90% |
| 1986-87 | 93% | 90% |
| 1987-88 | 96% | 95% |
| 1988-89 | 94% | 96% |
| 1989-90 | 95% | 96% |

Note. Needs Assessment results revealed that parents had little or no exposure to reading (Nichols, 1989).

All kindergartners in the school system were screened within 30 days before or after entry as mandated by the 1985 State Legislative Act 146.

The Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB) was the screening instrument used by the school system. The results from the screening battery were used as a diagnostic tool for instructional planning by the classroom teacher in the cognitive and physical-motor areas.

The CSAB provided the teacher with a survey of children's performance in four goal areas which included (a) discrimination of similarities and differences, (b) comprehension and concept formation, (c) coordination, and (d) immediate and delayed memory (Boehm & Slater, 1981).

According to Boehm and Slater (1981) "the CSAB did not set criterion levels and no total score was obtained. It did provide a profile of each child's skills in term of his or her success or difficulty in performing each task within each goal area, and a profile of the skills of a class as a whole" (p. 2).

The teacher analyzed the profiles for assistance in determining (a) areas in which all members of a class would benefit from instruction and (b) areas in which an individual child or only some children were in need of instruction. A review of the 1989-90 class profile for kindergartners in this school revealed that many pupils had some difficulty in performing tasks in three of the goal areas. The profile summary is presented in Appendix C.

To determine the extent in which kindergarten parents were involved in classroom and other school activities, the writer reviewed the 1989-90 School Visitors Registry, Pupils Conference Cards, PTA membership rooster, attendance logs for PTA meetings, and volunteers' sign-in sheets. A summary of their involvement is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Parental Involvement in School Activities

| | 1989-90 Kindergarten Parents | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Visits | | | |
| Activity | One | Two | Three | Four |
| Classroom | 26 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| Conference | 76 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| General School Visits | 65 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PTA Meetings | 25 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Special Assemblies | 68 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Volunteer Work | 7 | 4 | 4 | 0 |

Note. Number of parents = 80; Number of PTA members = 46; Number of volunteers = 7; Largest number of visits by a parent = 3.

The local reading council conducted a survey in the spring of 1990 to determine the opinions of parents relative to their involvement as individual readers and also as readers for their children. The results were being used

in the planning of community service projects as a part of the council's five year plan.

The results of the survey presented in Table 3 revealed that parents were involved in their children's learning activities on very limited bases.

Table 3

Survey Results of Parental Involvement in Reading

| | |
|---|---|
| Was read to as a child | 25% |
| Read to my child often | 15% |
| Reading should be taught by school | 95% |
| Reading begins at school | 95% |
| Talk leisurely with my child | 30% |
| Buy books for my child | 25% |

Note. Number surveyed = 100.

The findings of the Reading Council Survey compared favorably with the information obtained in the telephone interviews that the writer had had with low-income parents of kindergarten children.

Food Service Department records showed that the average income of a family eligible for free lunch was $12,900.00 The average income for reduced (one-half price) lunch was $15,000.00. The average family size

was seven. Fifty-five of the proposed practicum families were eligible for free lunch and 15 of the families were eligible for reduced lunch.

The school was ranked number three (out of 29 schools) in qualifying for Chapter I services with 592 of the 662 (89.4%) children eligible.

## Causative Analysis

> Children who were not spoken to by live and responsive adults did not learn to speak properly. Children who were not answered stopped asking questions. They became incurious. And children who were not told stories and who were not read to had few reasons for wanting to learn to read (Haley, cited in Trelease, 1989, p. 19).

"Research on parent and community involvement showed a strong connection between parental participation in the schools and student academic success" (Texas Education Agency, 1989, p. 13). "As urban public school students increasingly assumed a predominantly poor, minority character, efforts to improve school-home communication and cooperation had moved higher on the urban school reform agenda" (Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1988, p. 108).

There were however, some potential barriers that may have hindered effective programming efforts. Although, according to Texas Education Agency

(1989) "these potential barriers to involvement were most often found with respect to racial or ethnic minority parents, they occurred regardless of cultural or minority status. Understanding those barriers was a prerequisite to working effectively with all families in a school district" (p. 13). Texas Education Agency (1989) further stated that:

> The typical family of the 1980's was very different from that of preceding decades. Current demographic trends served to hinder effective communication, collaboration, and partnerships between parents and schools. Some changes in the American family which had contributed to communication barriers with the schools were a declining marriage rate, an increasing divorce rate, a rising number of single-parent homes, an increasing number of dual-income families, and an increasing number of families who lived in poverty. Other potential barriers included a lack of transportation, lack of time for involvement on the part of both parents and teachers, inadequate childcare arrangements, inflexible employer leave policies, negative attitudes of some school personnel towards parents, lack of access to parent and community involvement materials, lack of knowledge and information about the best practices for involvement, and lack of sufficient funding for programmatic involvement efforts (p. 13).

Hodgkinson (cited in Menacker et al. 1988) pointed out additional demographic trends that may have served as barriers to effective home - school partnerships. These demographic trends showed increases in such student characteristics as (1) being born of wedlock, (2) being "latch key" children, (3) having physical or mental handicaps, and (4) having poorly educated parents.

According to Mavrogenes (1990) "these parents faced pressures of economic survival and family maintenance. They often did not have the energy or the money to travel to school" (p. 4). These parents also felt that school professionals had expertise that they did not have, causing them to feel intimidated (Bastian, Fruchter, Gittell, Greer, & Haskins, 1987).

Contrastingly and unfortunately, even when parents were invited into schools, there were all too often no definite plans for using them effectively to improve the relationship there. "When parent participation had not been well thought out and well structured, parents' concerns about teaching methods, the goals of the school, and even the competency of the staff often led to conflict" (Comer, 1986, p. 444). Many parents, feeling that their participation was meaningless to the school staff became reluctant to be involved (Henderson, 1988; O'brien, 1988).

Smith (1990) stated that "often parents were under the impression

that the school did not want them to participate in the instructional process" (p. 332). Many parents and parent groups felt that their school paid lip service to the idea of parent participation in school activities, and that they were not really eager to have parents do more than observe, or make curtains for the assembly hall, or plan receptions for Founder's Day (Piers, 1955). "Many parents did not come to meetings at school, or otherwise become involved, because they were not allowed to do anything they felt was really important" (Greenberg, 1989, p. 66).

"In some schools, parents were called to school only when there was a problem" (Cromer, 1986, p. 444). According to Davies (1985) "two-thirds of all schools limited contact with the home to reporting discipline problems or sponsoring back-to-school night" (p. 20).

Some parents did not trust the school personnel. "Many of these feelings were based upon the personal experience of their own children, however many parents indicated their distrust of the school was based upon what they had heard or read through the media" (Rasimski & Fredericks, 1989, p. 263).

"Most parents had had unsuccessful or other negative experiences themselves and consequently did not view the school as the source of hope for their children's future success and welfare" (Menacker et al. 1988, p. 108).

According to Greenberg (1989); Menacker et al. (1988); Comer (1989) coming to school reinforced some parents negative feelings about the school. Coming to school made some parents feel inadequate and unhappy (Comer, 1986; Sattes, 1989).

Many parents felt insecure in the classroom setting and hesitant about participating in the school (Greenberg, 1989). Many parents did not have the necessary skills to help their children with the kind of home work required by some teachers (Sattes, 1989; Mavrogenes, 1990). "Parents were viewed by some teachers as having a negative impact on school reading instruction" (Rasinski, 1989, p. 226).

Additionally, some parents believed that the schools practiced institutional bias (Greenberg, 1989). "Parents may have been unwilling to encourage their children in school because they saw little value in education, or feared the schools would rob their children of their heritage, culture, and language" (Wisconsin Vocational Service Center, 1980, p. 8).

Sattes (1989) expressed her opinion about the problem and its causes with a challenge for change. She stated that "these attitudes were not likely to change without intervention, but it was encouraging to note that attitudes and behaviors could be changed" (p. 37).

## Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

One of the major problems besetting schools serving low-income minority populations was the lack of effective parent-school communication and cooperation. Educators generally identified the lack of adequate parental support and involvement as a major cause of poor discipline as well as substandard academic performance among lower-class pupils (Menacker et al. 1988, p. 108).

Davies (1985) stated that schools were particularly negligent about reaching out to lower-income parents. They assumed that linguistic, cultural, and physical barriers were insurmountable. That was a classic cop-out" (p. 20).

Additionally, Davies (1985) pointed out that schools often ignored the well-documented and surely widely known fact that many of their students came from families with many serious social, economic, and psychological stresses. He stated that "any program to involve parents must have taken into account this fact and included a strategy for coming to terms with it. Too often this task was neglected. And that neglect was not benign" (p. 20).

As an educational consultant for business executives and educators, Barnard (1989) had been exploring the societal and environmental circumstances which were jeopardizing the futures of so many of our

nation's young people. He stated that:

> Getting parents to care about their children's education was vital to the success of educators. Few teachers or principals would have disagreed that parental involvement was the key to a child's academic success. In a recent Metropolitan Life Insurance Company poll of 3,000 teachers and parents, lack of parental leadership was suggested as the underlying reason for children failure to learn to school. Another survey of some 2,500 educators in 12 midwestern states, conducted in the spring of 1989 by the Roper Organization, pointed to parental indifference as the main problem facing schools across the nation's midsection. Six of 10 Illinois educators in that poll, for example, agreed that parental neglect, unstable family life, and lack of parental involvement was a major obstacle to the scholastic achievement of their students (p. 1).

Greenberg (1989) pointed out that "as all teachers knew, the parents of poor students were the least likely of any parents to participate in school programs, or even show up at school" (p. 61).

According to Davies (1985) "this negligence was a very real threat to the momentum of the education reform movement. So long as the school and home stood in isolation, both suffered. And children suffered" (p. 20).

Even though the majority of parents wanted to help their children, some parents were unable or unwilling to participate or become actively involved in the activities of the school (Wisconsin Vocational Studies Center, 1981).

Greenberg (1989) stated that "many parents attended one or two school meetings and decided never to go again" (p. 71). She further stated that "to say that parents would not participate was to blame the victim, even though each of us could have come up with individual instances of parents who really could not have been induced to participate in their children's education in spite of remarkable efforts to attract them" (p. 72).

Many low-income parents were afraid that because of their limited knowledge about how to go about helping their children, they would have been interfering, therefore most of them did not (Mavrogenes, 1990).

Rasinski and Fredericks (1989) reported that the results of a 1988 national poll (published by Phi Delta Kappan) relative to parental participation in school programs showed that 26 percent of the parents felt that the schools' efforts were small or nonexistent. "Interestingly, this was the first time (in the 20 year history of this poll) that parents were asked about their participation" (p. 262).

According to Davies (1985) "the surge of interest in school reform had produced a whole new set of promising and innovative proposals for

improving school-community relations. But few of these proposals had been widely implemented. In general, both school and communities had been slow to act - or had not acted at all" (p. 20).

Research indicated that most parents wanted to help their children with their learning. Most parents were willing to become involved but they did not know how (Criscuolo, 1979; Davies, 1985; Greenberg, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989; Mavrogenes, 1990).

Davies (1985) emphasized that "symptomatic of the sluggish reaction to the call for school/community cooperation was the sorry state of programs to involve parents in the life of the school" (p. 20). Davies further pointed out that:

> If even the parents of school children stayed away, the community at large was hardly likely to support schools.
>
> And parents were staying away. In fact, it was almost as though they had initiated a boycott.
>
> The parent's fault? Yes. The school's fault? Yes. Neither side was above reproach. Nonetheless, schools had to take the lead in solving the problem (p. 20).

# CHAPTER III

# ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

## Goals and Expectations

The goals projected for this practicum were (a) to secure the active involvement of parents in their children's development of literacy; (b) to improve kindergarten teachers' communication skills and expand their strategies for reaching out to parents; and (c) to build a network of support for children by linking the resources of the home, the school, and the community.

## Behavioral Objectives

At the completion of this practicum (a) sixty-five of the 80 parents were projected to visit the classroom and/or participate in school activities at least four times as verified by the Parent Contract, the Classroom Visitors' Registry, and the School Visitors' Sign-In Sheet; (b) sixty-five of the 80 parents were projected to be actively involved in their children's development of literacy as verified by classroom/school activities reports, Open Activities Calendar, show and tell: parent-child presentations, and summaries of parents', teachers', and pupils' questionnaires; (c) the number of parent contacts initiated by each kindergarten teacher were

projected to increase by at least 30 as verified by a comparison with the number of teacher initiated contacts done in 1989-90 and the teachers' home communication records; (d) the positive character of communications with the home were projected to increase significantly over the negative character of communications as verified by the a comparison with the number of (positive vs. negative) communications done in 1989-90; (e) sixteen "parent help sessions" (PHS) were projected to be conducted as verified by the PHS Calendar, agendas, attendance rosters, listing of community presenters, and a comparison with the 1989-90 parent help sessions; and (f) sixty-five of the 80 parents were projected to become members of the PTA as verified by the PTA membership roster and a comparison with the 1989-90 membership.

## Measurement of Objectives

The parents participated in this "parent help" practicum twice a month for eight months. Each help session was scheduled for two hours.

A parent orientation session was conducted by the writer at the beginning of the practicum. The principal, coordinator, teachers, parent - service leader, aides, and supervisor also attended the orientation session. The practicum, its importance, calendar of activities, events, and topics

were presented. All forms (Parent Contract, calendars, School Visitors' Sign-In Book, and Classroom Visitors' Registry) were developed by the writer. All forms were presented and discussed. Each parent made the commitment to help his/her child through involvement in the child's learning experiences by signing the Parent Contract (see Appendix D). Each parent selected his/her three greatest needs (see Appendix E).

Each parent kept a record of the activities done at home with his/her child on the Open Activities Calendar (see Appendix F). Each parent signed the School Visitors' Sign-In Sheet (see Appendix G) each time he/she visited the school. Each parent signed the Classroom Registry (see Appendix H) and wrote the name of the activity in which he/she participated each time he/she visited the classroom.

Each parent's classroom participation and school visits were compiled and recorded by the writer at the end of each month. Each parent submitted his/her Open Activities Calendar to his/her child's teacher at the end of each month. The writer compiled and recorded this information on the master copy of Parents' Open Activities Calendar.

Each teacher kept a record of the number of contacts with parents that she initiated. Each teacher also kept a record of the characters (positive and negative) of her communication with the home on the Teacher Initiated

Home Contact Form (see Appendix I). Each teacher kept these records along with samples of her written communication in her "home communication" file.

The writer conducted the helping sessions with assistance provided by teachers, supervisors, librarian, textbook sales representatives, story teller, and other community people according to topic appropriateness. Copies of the sessions' calendar, agendas, attendance rosters, (see Appendix J), and a list of community presenters were kept in the writer "help session" file. A list of PTA members was obtained from the PTA membership chairperson.

All attendance and participation records were compiled, analyzed, and presented with numerical growth comparisons using table(s). The questionnaires were compiled, analyzed, and presented in opinion categories of similarity and contrast using narratives and table(s). The teachers' home communication records: teacher initiated contacts and characters of communication were classified, compiled, and compared with the preceding year and presented with numeral growth figures using narratives and table(s). The data from the parent help sessions and the questionnaires (see Appendix K) were reviewed, compiled, and presented in summary statements. The number of PTA memberships were compared with the

preceding year's membership and the finding presented in summary statements and a table.

The writer kept a log to record unexpected events that occurred during the implementation of the practicum.

# CHAPTER IV

# SOLUTION STRATEGY

## Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The parents participating in this practicum (a) had had limited involvement in their children's learning experiences at home and at school; (b) wanted to help their children but did not know how; and (c) were interested in being involved in school activities but felt that they did not know what to do.

This practicum focused on these parents while addressing the problem: some parents of beginning readers, despite a desire to be helpful, did not know how to effectively support their children's literacy development.

> It had long been recognized that students' success in schools depended on much more than what happened in the classroom. McGraw-Hill, Incorporated (1989) pointed out that while effective teaching and a positive nurturing classroom environment were essential, the attitude and involvement of the home could have an even greater influence (p. iii).

Why were the effects of families so powerful? According to Gandara (1989) "part of the answer was that parents were the child's first educators. Half of children's mature intellect was formed at home before they even reached school. So were cultural patterns, notions of basic behavior, and

basic values" (p. 39).

Smith (1990) stated that "though no one denied that the school played a key part in the long term growth of the child, the child's mind was naturally primed to view the actions of parents as personal priorities." (p. 332).

Studies done by Tizard, Mortimore, and Burchell (1981); Friend (1982); and Johnston (1989) showed that parental involvement, interest, and supportive attitudes toward the education of their children had a positive effect on pupil attainment. According to Wolfendale (1983) parents had an important role to play in fostering language development and the experiences it provided in their children's development of literacy.

That parents had an important role in helping their children during the early years develop an interest and readiness for reading by providing language and other experiences that laid the foundation had been well established by both educators and researchers. However, these same educators and researchers were also aware that there were some parents who were not providing these experiences for their children. According to MacCarry (1989) these parents were often from low income homes, where there were few, if any books. They lived in homes where children may have had little opportunity to carry on conversations with adults, or ask questions and search for their answers in books.

How could these parents who seemingly lacked orientation toward reading and books have helped as partners in their children's education? Were they interested in their children's education? What could be done to motivate them to want to become partners?

According to Johnston (1989) a 1970s survey confirmed most teachers' notions that there was a definite association between class and reading. Results of the survey showed that the child of an unskilled laborer was more at risk to be a poor reader than the child of a professional. Additional comparisons are discussed in Table 4.

Table 4
Comparison of Social Class and Reading

| Factor | Working Class | Professional |
|---|---|---|
| Reading Environment | Twice as many never read to by parents | Twice as many more read to by parents |
| Home Library | Few, if any books | Sizable book Collection |
| Library Members | 34% membership | 64% membership |

Note. The difference between the social classes and reading was more a matter of economics than it was lack of interest (Nichols, 1989).

The survey however, found that the percentages were identical (80%) when looking at the factor of parents helping children to read. Both groups

of parents viewed themselves as having a role to play in the basic aspect of their children's education (Nichols, 1989).

Other research that indicated that working class parents did not lack interest in their children's education was cited by Mortimore and Blackstone (1982). They suggested that it was more a situation of the parents being inhibited because of insufficient knowledge of the school's curriculum or their lack of self confidence. The common response that only a few parents in a low-income area would participate in any initiative to involve them in their children's education was also disproved by Weinberger, Jackson, and Hannon (1986); Epstein (cited in Brandt, 1989); Greenberg (1989).

In a review of a study done in the London Borough of Haringey in the 1970s to find out if there were a casual relationship between parental help in children's reading and children's reading performance, Tizard, Schofield, and Hewison (1982) found that the children who (a) took their books home; (b) interacted in reading assignments with their parents; and (c) were monitored by both parent and teacher, made greater gains than either the control or withdrawal groups, across all ability levels. These gains were also made by children from homes where parents had very little education, were illiterate, or non-English speaking.

According to Friedberg (1989) most parents, no matter how economically

burdened, wanted the best for their children. Summarizing the attitudes and reactions of parents who had been involved in a pilot parent participation project, she stated that "the parents were receptive and appreciative. Their comments on the follow-up questionnaires showed that they valued the gift (four paperback children's books, a tips for success in sharing books pamphlet and a flyer describing local library programs) and the activities it introduced. In addition to the children's enjoyment of the books, an average of at least six other family members enjoyed each packet of books" (p. 16).

Most parents were willing to become more supportive, yet they often did not know how to get involved. Some believed that they needed advice from educators before they could help their children succeed in school (Weinstein, Wittrock, Underwood & Schuffle, 1983; O'Brien, 1988).

The writer, in her interviews with 20 parents of the participating children, learned that every one of the parents had the desire and eagerness to be involved in their children's education. They also expressed that their lack of involvement was due to their feelings of inadequacy relative to knowing how to help.

The lack of knowledge as to how to go about it rather than the lack of interest may then have been the cause of parents not being involved in their

Children's learning experiences. A possible solution then, was to help and/or train parents in ways to help their children.

Meyerhoff and White (1986) pointed out that in order to make significant difference in the academic prospects of young children, you worked through the people who had the greatest influence on their lives during this period -- their parents. One of the three conclusions of their basic research on early development and guidelines for parents was that the practice of offering little or no help or preparation to the child's parents often led to additional stress, reduced pleasure, and educational losses for everyone involved.

Additionally, Frederick and Rasinski (1990) stated that "the added support on the home front promoted positive student attitudes toward learning throughout the entire elementary curriculum" (p. 692).

Wahl (1988) stressed that since parents were the child's first teacher, it was most essential for classroom teachers to provide them with practical ideas that could be implemented in the home.

According to Johnston (1989) "to have left unharnessed this largely untapped resource of parents could well have required more justification than the introduction of parental involvement" (p. 357), for as Newson and Newson (1977) wrote: "A revolution in literacy could have been sparked

off and fueled by parents and teachers in determined co-operation" (p. 164).

The importance of parents as partners in educating their children could not have been over emphasized. It had been proven in study after study. The State Department of Education [SDE] (1988) stressed that "parents were essential participants in the education of their children" (p. 1). Hester (1989) pointed out that "parent involvement in their youngster's education was imperative to student success" (p. 23). Research confirmed parental involvement in children's education was a key factor in children's academic success (Anderson et al. 1985; Rich, 1985; Combs, 1986; Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Gandara, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989; Trelease, 1989; Mavrogenes; 1990; Seely, 1990).

The parents involved in this practicum seldom communicated with the school. Their involvement in the teaching/learning activities of their young children was very limited. They were interested in their children's learning experiences and wanted to help but did not know how. Most important, however, was the fact that, in general, these parents acknowledged both a responsibility and willingness to help their children toward literacy.

If schools did not work to involve low-income parents, then parent education and family social class were very important for deciding who became involved. But if schools took parental involvement seriously and

worked to involve all parents, then social class and parents' level of education decreased or disappeared as important factors (Epstein, cited in Brandt, 1989, p. 25).

The writer believed that the time was right for seeking greater parent involvement in fostering their children's literacy. The "teachers and principal were key individuals in helping parents learn and provided concrete suggestions to that end" (Mavrogenes, 1990, p. 4). Some solutions that were utilized by the school in helping parents help their children toward literacy were as follows:

1. Improved home/school communication: "Effective communication was the foundation for all other parent involvement activities. Strategies for communicating with parents were accomplished by personal contact through visits at home or school, telephone calls, parent-teacher conferences and written messages" (SDE, 1988, p. 5).

2. Increased parental participation in developing educational programs for children: "This type of involvement referred to the opportunities that parents had to teach their children" (SDE, 1988, p. 39). The parent was the child's first and most permanent teacher. Home learning activities represented an important strategy. Classroom volunteer programs also provided opportunities for parents to "teach" and help teachers.

3. Conducted parenting classes and programs: This category of involvement represented the opportunities schools gave parents to learn about the school program and to increase their skills in order to help their children. Parent education included a variety of topics such as child growth and development, reading development, nutrition, family management, and many more (SDE, 1988).

4. Developed innovative and creative ways to involve parents in schools: "Volunteerism was an excellent method by which schools combated inflation and declining resources. Schools also improved their partnership with parents and community. Volunteer programs extended the educational dollar by lowering the adult/pupil ratio, offering remedial and enrichment opportunities to students, and allowing for individualized programs" (SDE, 1988, p. 89). Schools also improved their accountability with parents and community.

5. Created an atmosphere of mutual cooperation between school and parents: "The cooperative program was an extension of using volunteers in the classroom. It was a means of organizing parents into a defined program. Parents agreed to work a certain amount of time each month in the classroom and attended regular planning meetings" (SDE, 1988, p. 105). This plan required considerable time and energy on the part of the teacher. In the

cooperative concept, some families donated a specific amount of time to the program each month.

"Young children whose backgrounds placed them "at-risk" of failing or falling far behind would outperform their friends for years if their parents were given training in home teaching" (Henderson, 1988, p. 149).

The preceding solutions found in the literature lent support and also helped to justify the rationale for this practicum. While some very passive parental involvement was used in most low-income elementary schools on a limited basis, the writer believed that there was sufficient historical precedent and applicable theory to recommend that it was time to aggressively recruit, train, and actively involve parents in meaningful home-school partnerships on a regular and continuous basis.

## Description of Selected Solution

A fair number of young children entered kindergarten knowing how to read. A larger number entered ready to absorb whatever reading and writing opportunities were offered. Clearly, their previous environments had favored the development of this early or near literacy and, almost always, parents had been the key figure in this development (U. S.Department of Education, 1986). Although, for many reason,

middle-income parents tended to do a better job than did low-income parents at encouraging literacy, parents' income by itself did not determine early or primary-grade literacy (U.S. Department of Education, 1986). Most things that parents did to encourage reading and writing involved time, attention, and sensitivity rather than money. All parents could learn to foster children's literacy (Mavrogenes, 1990, p. 4).

The urgency and importance of involving parents in their children's education became greater every day. "This country's demographics were changing rapidly. A larger percentage of school-age children were coming from poor and minority homes than ever before. One child out of four lived in poverty. All indications were that circumstances were worsening for the poor" (Gandara, 1989, p. 40).

According to Mavrogenes (1989) "researching and teaching low-income parents required teachers and principals to understand the parents' situation: These parents faced pressures of economic survival and family maintenance; they often did not have the energy or the money to travel to schools" (p. 4).

Gandara (1989) asked, "How did we make it possible for disadvantaged families to produce advantaged students? We started by defining our children as an economic resource,...and in a very personal way, acknowledged

them as our children, our resource" (p. 40). Gandara further stated that "we chose to change the course of children's lives not because it was a generous thing to do, but because it was a smart thing to do: A good investment of our resources" (p. 40).

Friedberg (1989) pointed out that children who entered school from backgrounds void of models for literacy were at a greater risk academically than their more experientially prepared peers. Many of these children, like those illiterate or marginal literate adults who have attracted public attention, were at-risk for growing up to be the next generation of the same.

Illiteracy was costly and tragic for both the person and the community. As stated in the slogan of the United Negro College Fund, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste", the cost was astronomically non-caring and embarrassingly inhumane.

The question we needed to be asking, according to Gandara (1989) "was not what could poor parents do to aid their children's schooling but, what could schools and parents do together to create communities that would nurture all our children" (p. 41)?

Hester (1989) stated that "children from low-income and minority families, in particular, had the most to gain when schools involved parents"

(p. 24).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) addressed parents in a postscript: "As surely as you were your children's first and most important teachers, your children's ideas about education and its significance began with you....Moreover, you bear a responsibility to participate actively in your children's education" (p. 30).

Parents could and should have been informed participants and decision makers in any parent-teacher program, whether at the school or classroom level (Rasinski, 1989). However, "Parents could hardly have been expected to become active in the schools unless they had the necessary skills" (Bellack & Hallin, 1989, p. 414). "Increased parent involvement required the development of specific skills" (Lamme, 1985, p. 212).

"Teachers and administrators have learned (a) how to hold parent conferences, (b) how to show parents ways to reinforce and extend classroom lessons, and (c) how to involve parents in advisory committees" (Lamme, 1985, p. 212).

Hester (1989) emphasized that "efforts to improve parental involvement payed tremendous dividends. With personal commitment, planning, and continuing efforts, these benefits were realized in our schools" (p. 24).

According to Hester (1989) "there was no recipe or blue print for

parent involvement that could have been commonly applied in every school setting" (p. 24). However, the selected solutions presented in the "parent involvement approaches" (so named by Menacker et al. 1988, p. 110) which follow, were proven practices found in the literature that had worked well at the early childhood through primary education levels.

The approaches that were used in this practicum represented a broad spectrum of parent involvement activities that was also included in a long-ranged plan for a (K-5) home-school relations program scheduled to begin with the 1991-92 school year. The approaches were:

1. Parents as Clients (participation as a privilege, public relations emphasis): This approach focused on home-school communication and included activities such as: (a) parent-teacher conferences, (b) home-visits (c) open house, (d) parents' special visitation day(s), (e) Grandparents Day, (f) "good news" calls (telephone); (g) notes from a V.I.P. (the principal); and (h) specific efforts: written communication.

2. Parents as Producers (parental support in various supporting activities - as teachers at home, and as volunteers at school): This approach focused on home learning activities and classroom volunteer programs that included monthly activities such as (a) Reading Aloud: parents and children using the "shared" Book" technique, (b) Open Activities

Calendar, (c) Activities to Do Calendar, (d) "News at Five" (newsletter) and (e) Magazine and Book Lists.

3. Parents as Consumers (direct school service to parents on evenings/ weekends): This approach focused on parent training activities and included the eight month parent training sessions (see pp. 62-70).

4. Parents as Governors (participation in evaluation, accountability, decision-making areas): This approach focused on parents as partners in decision making and included activities such as School Improvement Council and PTA.

It was essential to provide parents with practical ideas that were to be implemented in the home. According to Wahl (1988) "parent did not need to focus on specific reading skills to perform their role as reading teachers, but they...did need to...provide informal learning experiences which fostered an interest in and love for reading" (p. 228) while helping to develop literacy.

Wahl (1988) developed the ABC's of Reading for parents. It was a unique and practical set of examples of literacy building activities that was presented to the practicum parents. They were encouraged to "pick and choose" the ones that met their needs.

1. Assortment of books: Had an assortment of picture books, ABC

books, poetry books, nursery rhymes, and fairy tale collections within the child's reach throughout the entire house. Book ownership was important for promoting the reading habit.

2. Bookmaking: Assisted the child in creating his/her own books. Parents purchased blank books or created homemade ones. The child dictated stories to the parent and illustrated them. Helped the child keep a diary or wrote special events on a calendar. Bookmaking helped the child to see talk being written down, and it was fun for the children to read their own stories.

3. Cooking: Cooking was a daily activity in which parents included the child. S/he helped read the recipes, added the ingredients, recognized food names and name brands, and became familiar with abbreviations. Kitchen experiences provoked questions and enabled the child to experiment with new words.

4. Discussions: The child's vocabulary was extended through participation in discussions with parents and others. It was important to be a good listener and let the child know that what s/he said was important.

5. Errands: Taking children on errands exposed them to the print in their world. Read and pointed out signs for fast food restaurants,

gas stations, movie theaters, and stores as parents did errands. Read billboards, stop signs, license plates, and street signs. It was important for children to become aware of environment print.

6. Free play: Play is the child's work, and it was through play that s/he learned about other people and their work. Encouraged free play and provided the child with opportunities to interact with other children. Provided props for playing house, hospital, grocery store, and office. Puppets were excellent props for retelling stories. Other good investments included a sand box, magnetic letters, blocks, and picture dominoes.

7. Grocery shopping: The child was an active participant in grocery shopping. Invited children to write and read grocery lists, sort coupons, read grocery ads, discover labels on the food packages, and read the signs in the grocery store. Grocery shopping experiences enabled the child to see the importance of reading in an ordinary, everyday situation.

8. Habits: Habits were formed early in life. Helped children develop the library habit by taking them to the library regularly. These young children enjoyed having their own library cards and being able to check out the books they selected. The library offered a

variety of media materials, story hours, and other programs.

9. Informal learning: Informal learning experiences started during infancy. Turned daily routines into hands-on, concrete experiences. These experiences helped prepare the child for the formal learning experiences at school.

10. Junk treasures: The child participated in opening the mail-opening junk mail was a treat. Read letters and other mail to the child. Children helped pay bills, answered letters, and wrote letters to friends and relatives. Children enjoyed sending and receiving mail. With assistance, they created birthday cards and wrote thank you notes for gifts.

11. Kidwatching: Yetta Goodman coined the term "kidwatching" to describe an important job of parents (Lamme, 1985). Kidwatching involved observing the child to become familiar with what s/he knew and did not know as well as what s/he could and could not say (Lamme, 1985). Learned a lot about the child though observing in different settings.

12. Lap technique: The lap technique of reading aloud to the child provided a sense of security as the parent held the child close and shared books. Booksharing created a special bond as parent/child learned about each other and the world of books. The lap technique helped the child associate reading with a pleasant, nonthreatening situation.

13. **M**agazines: A subscription to a children's magazine was a worthwhile investment. There were all-purpose magazines such as *The Weekly Reader Magazine* and *Sesame Street* or special topic magazines such as *Turtle* and *Humpty Dumpty*. Children enjoyed receiving their very own magazines in the mail.

14. **N**ursery rhymes: It was fun to share the nursery rhymes from parents' own childhood with children. It was through repetition that they learned the nursery rhymes and began to recite them on their own. Shared favorite songs and fingerplays.

15. **O**pportunities for booksharing: Booksharing opportunities should have become part of the daily routine before the child's first birthday. It was helpful to establish a certain time for reading to the child each day, and no interruptions should have disturbed this valuable experience. Booksharing developed a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm for books in just 15 minutes a day.

16. **P**atience: The parents' role in reading required patience. Created a supportive environment and encouraged the child to experiment with language. Including the child in errands, cooking experiences, and other daily routines required time and energy, but the benefits were many. Practiced as the child learned about the world.

17. **Q**uestions: Children asked many questions about things new to them. Was sensitive to these questions and took the time to explain the answers. In booksharing, parents provided time for questions before and after the book was read. Remembered to ask a variety of questions which required the child to think critically about the story, and tried to avoid focusing on factual questions which tested the child on the story content.

18. **R**ead aloud sessions: Reading aloud to the child required some practice, and parents needed to consider the atmosphere around them. Good lighting, minimal noise distractions, and comfortable seating were emphasized. Chose books that related to the child's experiences as well as those that introduced new people, places, and experiences. Read aloud sessions involved more than reading a book and talking about it - parents extended them through extra activities, such as baking gingerbread cookies after reading a version of *The Gingerbread Man.*

19. **S**ensory experiences: The child needed to become aware of the five senses. It was not difficult to provide stimulating sensory activities. An example was a walk in the woods where the child could touch trees, hear birds, smell flowers, and see the leaves.

20. **Television** time: Helped the children develop good television

habits and helped them monitor their TV time. Parents needed to select worthwhile programs and watch and discuss them with the children. Discussions made TV time a less passive activity.

21. Unpressured learning: Parents did not need to put extra pressure on children to read words, but encouraged them to read their world as they experience it. Was understanding and supportive.

22. Value of reading: Became a reading role model. The child should see parents getting into books, magazines, and newspapers. It was important for her/him to see the different purposes for reading, such as reading for information, pleasure, and survival in a world saturated with print. Reading became valued in most of the children's homes.

23. Writing experiences: Writing was an essential in the reading process. Writing materials like pens, pencils, crayons, markers, and as assortment of paper were available for experimenting. Had a special writing spot. Writing experiences included letter writing, making labels for photo albums or other household items, journal writing, story writing, and making words for wordless picture books.

24. eXtra attention: Parents' role in early reading required them to devote extra attention to their children's needs and helped with

their first encounters with print. Obtained help from books such as *The Read Aloud Handbook* (Trelease, 1989) and *Make Your child a Lifelong Reader* (Gross, 1988).

25. Your literate home: Created a nurturing and literate environment for the young child to learn and grow in. The experiences in the home made a difference in the child's reading development.

26. Zoo trips: Zoo trips, museums, amusement parks, and community parks were places that parents/teachers visited with the child. Visits to these special places engaged the child in new experiences to learn from and talk about. These experiences were extended by using children's literature before and after the visits (pp. 228-231).

"The teachers and the principal made suggestions that came alive for these parents. Sending home a ditto of "good ideas" tended to be ineffective. Low-income parents were not likely to do things they had never thought important just because the schools said they should" (Mavrogenes, 1990, p. 5). These activities were done in the classrooms and also demonstrated in the PHS.

Until parents appreciated their personal influence on the education of their children, simply listing instructional practices did little to expand parental involvement. "We accepted as a truism that parents wanted their

children to succeed. If they failed to help their children develop good reading habits, therefore, it had possibly indicated that they were not convinced that their personal efforts made much of a difference with their children" (Smith, 1990, p. 332).

In its review of research, the book *What Works* (1986) stated: "parental involvement helped children learn more effectively. Teachers who were successful at involving parents in their children's schoolwork were successful because they worked at it" (p. 19). According to Smith (1990) this meant that teachers consistently asked parents for help through strategies like these:

1. Asked parents to read aloud to the child, to listen to the child read, to sign homework papers.

2. Described ways that parents could extend schoolwork by using home-based materials, playing related games, searching for ideas in reference materials.

3. Asked parents to visit the classroom to see how the teacher and the children worked together on various reading activities.

4. Used the child's written response to reading as a way of getting parents and children to discuss and to listen to each other (p. 332).

The parent training sessions were conducted "so that parents

experienced first hand what they needed to do to help their children" (Mavrogenes, 1990, p. 5). Meetings were held at varying times of the day and/or evening to permit parent who worked various shifts and parents who lived far away the opportunity to attend (Greenberg, 1989). Decisions on meeting time(s) were made by the parent group.

During the practicum some child study sessions were conducted in which teachers and parents together practiced observing and developing understanding of young children. They problem solved together about a child's difficulties (Greenberg, 1989).

"Many parents did not know these things instinctively. Often, parents were under the impression that the school did not even want them to participate in the instructional process. Thus, teachers and schools needed to find ways of giving parents more encouragement and ideas" (Smith, 1990, p. 332). Teachers and schools needed to make extra efforts to "reach out" and help parents help their children learn.

The net result of the preceding solutions was to help parents learn how to be involved in their children's learning experiences. In similar studies (Rich, 1985; Combs, 1986; Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Gandara, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989; Trelease, 1989; Mavrogenes, 1990; Seely, 1990) the results showed that parents applied this information in

home and school activities when working with children. Their experiences with helping children learn were meaningful, enjoyable, and successful.

Educators in the school system in which the writer works, both administrators and teachers, had utilized and advocated parental involvement. They had also encouraged the provision of parent training in helping children for many years. However, their choices of solutions had all been for brief periods of time and dealt with a variety of unrelated topics. These brief encounters and wide range of topics had been fragmented and unsuccessful. Time and consistency in parent training had not been coupled together, or paired for maximum results.

According to Henderson (1988) parent involvement has had significant, long lasting effects. "In fact, these effects varied directly with the duration and intensity of the parent involvement: the more, the better" (p. 15).

From the information found in the literature, the writer believed that by training parents over an extended period of time with consistent, related topics and activities, meaningful and beneficial results would occur. The writer also believed that exposing these parents' children to developmentally appropriate activities at school combined with parental involvement in related and developmentally appropriate activities at home would help solve the problem. And they did. These parents became able to help their children toward literacy. These parents developed helping "know-how" and

the habit of reading and sharing. They discovered joy in listening and interacting. These parents and their children wrote stories - some real, some make-believe. They went places, saw things, and experienced a great adventure. And along the way, literacy began--because "Thus A Child Learned" (Author unknown, cited in Ouachita Parish school System, 1975, p. 17).

by wiggling skills through his fingers and toes into himself;
by soaking up habits and attitudes of those around him;
by pushing and pulling his own world.

Thus a child learned:
more through trial than error;
more through pleasure than pain;
more through experience than suggestion;
more through suggestion than direction.

Thus a child learned:
through affection,
through love,
through patience,
through understanding,
through belonging,
through doing,
through being.

Day by day the child came to know a little bit of what you know;
to think a little bit of what you think;
to understand your understanding.

That which you dreamed and believed and were, in truth, became the child;
as you perceived dully or clearly;
as you thought fuzzily or sharply;
as you believed foolishly or wisely;
as you dreamed drably or goldenly;
as you bore false witness or told the truth---
Thus a child learned.

## Report of Action Taken

The writer was able to successfully complete the practicum, "Helping Parents Help Their Children Toward Literacy," utilizing the actions and activities presented in the following summary of the practicum implementation.

### Preimplementation Action

At the end of the 1989-90 school year, the writer was granted approval to implement the practicum from the school system's Research Committee and her verifier. Permission to implement the practicum in the selected school's kindergarten classrooms was granted by the principal and the four classroom teachers. Plans for parent orientation, training activities, and evaluation components were developed by the writer a month before the practicum began. The selected central staff, school based staff, public librarians, counselor, story teller, minister, and sales representatives from publishing companies consented to make presentations to the parents according to the writer's schedule.

### Implementation Action

During the first month, a parent orientation session was conducted to explain the practicum program. Parents' and teachers' roles and responsibilities as partners in literacy development were emphasized. Their major thrust was to surround these children with print and engage

them in literacy activities. "When parents and teachers planned children's environments and activities carefully so that literacy was an integral part of everything they did, then literacy learning became a natural and meaningful part of children's everyday lives" (Schickendanz, 1986, p. 125). Parental commitments to actively participate were solicited and obtained. The Parent Needs Assessment and Parent Contracts were completed by **all** parents. A parent training session packet (containing Activities Calendars: monthly and open, tentative agendas, Tips for Parents, Collection of Games and Activities, pencils, paper, markers, colors, scissors, and glue) was given to each parent and teacher. Parents decided to meet twice each month and specified the second and fourth Tuesday as the meeting days. Two sections of each session were provided - one at 9:00 a.m. and one at 6:00 p.m. which made it convenient for both working and non-working parents. Agendas for the remaining sessions were determined from the results of the needs assessment. An attendance roll was signed by all participants (at each session).

The parents were provided a special treat for their second session. They attended a system-wide School Opening Kick-Off that featured Jim Trelease as guest speaker. The theme for the rally was "Read Aloud with the Literacy Crowd." A question and answer period was provided in order for parents to

have opportunities to interact with the renown author. The event was sponsored by the District P.T.A., the local reading council, and the school system. Bus transportation was provided by the school system.

Session three opened the second month with activities that enriched and extended the first month's topic. The writer emphasized how the joy of reading nurtures the partnership of "Reading-Aloud and Literacy." Tips for reading aloud were presented which included (a) arrange reading time each day; (b) read with enthusiasm (c) start with picture books; (d) make sure the children can see the pictures easily; (e) allow time for discussion; and (f) enjoy the story with children. Shared reading and big books captured the highlight.

The children's librarian from the main branch of the public library system presented "The Library: A Place of Continuous Adventure". She explained how to use the card catalog and the check-out system at the fourth session. Applications for library cards were completed and processed. The school's counselor, librarian, secretary, and office clerical aid volunteered their time and typing skills for the processing.

"Calendar of Home Activities" was the topic discussed at the fifth session which was conducted during the third month. The four kindergarten teachers demonstrated activities for extending classroom skills through

home reinforcement. The calendar for September was used in the presentation. The October calendar was distributed to parents at the end of the session for home use by parents and children. The activities suggested for home implementation were planned "for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 54). The teachers suggested activities that developed language and literacy through meaningful experience. According to Bredekamp (1987) "basic skills developed only when they were meaningful to children" (p. 55). These type activities are developmentally appropriate for kindergartners and included: "listening to and reading stories and poems; taking field trips; dictating stories; seeing classroom charts and other print in use; participating in dramatic play and other experiences requiring communication; talking informally with other children and adults; and experimenting with writing by drawing, coping, and inventing their own spelling." (Bredekamp, 1987, 55).

The sixth session (conducted at the end of the third month) found parents and teachers at the conference table. During the first half of the session, the importance of the parent-teacher conference as a major communication tool in building positive home-school relationships was presented by the writer. Tips for an effective conference were shared.

Some tips included were (a) schedule a time to meet with the teacher, (b) make a list of questions you want to ask, (c) inform the teacher of important things about the child, (d) plan a working routine (for the child) with the teacher, and (e) volunteer your help when possible. Role playing of a variety of conferences was the highlight of the second half of the session. Parents played both roles - parent and teacher.

Whole language was the focus for the seventh session. The Supervisor of Elementary Education in charge of reading emphasized how language could be taught naturally as it occurred within a social environment rather than segmented into bits and pieces. Language experience was used in parent teams of four as "each parent decided what stories they wanted to write and then went back and read them" (Quintero & Huerta-Macias, 1990, p. 306) to their team mates.

A **"make and take"** workshop was the activity for the fun filled eighth session. By the end of the fourth month and mid-point of the practicum, most of the parents had gained confidence in the school staff as positive partners and helpers in the education and training of their children and themselves. Average attendance per session had grown from 20 parents to 30 parents. Most parents had made new friends and had begun to work as teams. Teamwork was evident at this session as parents used assembly

line techniques to complete readiness games and activities to take home. An average of four games per parent was completed. Parents were encouraged to make as many activities as possible for their home centers. This made it possible for the children to have choices from among a variety of learning activities. At home, these "children were provided concrete learning activities with materials and people relevant to their own life experiences" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 54).

The ninth and tenth sessions were "joys to remember" for the parents, teachers, and the writer. During each of these sessions (that were held in the fifth month) parents showed-off their parenting skills as they shared some of their favorite "at-home" activities. Each parent participated with his or her child in what was called **"The Literacy Share Fair."** Parents rated their progress as **wonderful**.

Parents told how they helped their children learn about reading every day - when they took them to the grocery store or when they pointed out street signs, for example. "These kind of experiences with print gave children a broad and meaningful introduction to reading. If reading were to make sense to children, they must have seen how it was used in life" (Schickendanz, 1936, p. 127).

Bookmen set up exhibits in the library conference room for the

eleventh and twelfth sessions that were conducted from January 14-25, 1991 - the sixth month of the practicum. Parents were invited to visit and browse at their convenience during the hours from nine to eleven and from one to three. Additionally, the exhibit was opened from six to eight p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. The exhibit was supervised by the school's coordinator from nine to eleven; the schools' supervisor from one to three; and the school's director (the writer) from six to eight on Tuesdays and Thursday only. Books were sold at discount prices ranging from 50% to 75% off the regular prices. A door prize winner was announced each day.

The "Wonders of Storytelling" was presented by a professional story teller who is also a counselor in one of the school system's elementary schools. Parents were actively involved in the storytelling as requested by the storyteller. Involvement included shared reading, role playing, and producing sound effects. Paperback books were given away as door prizes at the end of the storytelling and thirteenth session.

Make and Take was just as successful and just as much fun the second time around as it was the first time. Some parents requested additional materials to take home and complete. Their requests were granted. One parent's remarks summarized the success of the fourteenth session and the end of the seventh month. She stated, "No one could have made me believe

that I'd have this much fun coloring, cutting, and pasting." Another parent added, "This reminds me of paper dolls. You can't wait to try them out."

The fifteenth session was a repeat of the ninth and tenth sessions with parents and pupils proudly demonstrating their favorite at-home activities. During that session, parent networking and support systems were evident. Parents swapped games and activities as well as made commitments to share in the future. For example, one parent told the group, "I'll cut and paste the games if someone would do the coloring." A parent partnership was instantly formed with another parent who immediately said, "Sounds great to me. I'll be glad to pair with you."

A special assembly began this practicum and a special assembly ended it. Parents were invited to attend an assembly in the school's auditorium that featured one of the city's young, black, and most successful ministers. His topic was "Promoting Positive Self Images." His major tips were (a) show children that you love them; (b) spend time with children; (c) provide children with the opportunities to succeed; (d) treat children with respect; (e) praise children for completing assignments around the house; and (f) teach children to respect others. The assembly was sponsored by Chapter I. Following the presentation, a question and answer period (that evolved into a motivational share time) was provided.

A wrap-up period immediately following the assembly, concluded the sixteenth session, the eight month, and the final parent training phase of the practicum. Parents and teachers completed questionnaires that were utilized in the evaluation of the practicum. Student questionnaires were administered to the kindergartners by their teachers during the next day at school. All results were compiled and recorded.

**Post-implementation Action**

One week after the completion of the practicum, all parents, presenters, and teachers were invited by the writer to a parent involvement celebration held in the school's multi-purpose room. Parents, presenters, and the kindergarten teachers were presented Certificates of Involvement for participating in the parent involvement practicum (see Appendix L ). Each of the classrooms was provided a set of big books donated by a publishing company. Refreshments were served. Parents and teachers spent the remainder of the evening informally talking and sharing ideas with each other.

# CHAPTER V

## RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Results

The goals for this practicum were (a) to secure the active involvement of parents in their children's development of literacy; (b) to improve kindergarten teachers' communication skills and expand their strategies for reaching out to parents; and (c) to build a network of support for children by linking the resources of the home, the school, and the community.

Parents of 80 kindergartners who attended a public school located in a low-income area participated in this parent help practicum twice a month for eight months. Each help session (provided a choice of time option: 9:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. and) was scheduled for two hours. Four kindergarten classrooms (each with 20 students, a teacher, and a teacher's aide) were the setting for the practicum.

The first standard of performance was 65 of the 80 parents were projected to visit the classroom and/or participate in school activities at least four times (during the eight months) as verified by the Parent Contract, the School Visitors' Sign-In Sheet, and the Classroom Visitors' Registry.

At the completion of this practicum, 80 of the 80 parents had made the commitment to help his/her child through involvement in his/her

learning experiences by signing the Parent Contract. Most of these parents kept their commitments to be involved in their children's literacy development as verified in the summary of their visits to the school and to the classroom that is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Summary of Classroom and School Visits

| | TOTAL NUMBER | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parents | Classroom Visits | School Activities | Combination of Visits |
| 20 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| 15 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 25 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 15 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

Note. Seventy-five of the 80 parents visited the classroom and/or school at least four times.

Each parent signed the Visitors' Sign-In Sheet each time he/she visited the school. Each parent signed the Classroom Visitors' Registry each time he/she visited the classroom. To keep an account of parents' on-site involvement, the writer compiled the visits (to the classroom and to school activities) from the School Visitors' Sign-In Sheet and the Classroom

Visitors' Registry and recorded them at the end of each month. The writer informed the teachers each month of the parents' visitation progress. Using that information, each teacher planned her communication "out-reach" strategies for the following month which included invitations to (a) "Classroom Progress Show-Offs", (b) conferences, (c) "Help! Parents Needed (volunteers for classroom activities"), and (d) "Watch Our Center Stuff".

The projected goal for the first standard of performance was exceeded by 60 of the 80 parents with 20 of them visiting eight times, 15 of them visiting seven times, and 25 of them visiting five times. Additionally, 15 more parents met the projected goal requirement with four visits. Only five parents did not reach the goal, visiting the school and/or classroom three or less times during the eight months.

According to Fredericks and Rasinski (1990) promoting and extending the school's outreach efforts to involve parents "signaled the importance of parents as vital and necessary components of a well rounded curriculum" (p. 267). By the end of the practicum, parents saw themselves in different and positive ways. As one parent proudly pointed out, "I no longer feel that I'm in the way. Instead I know that I'm on the way - on the way to knowing how to help my baby."

The children also felt good about their parents being involved in their

classrooms. The smile and the happy voice of one little boy (when his mother visited his classroom) said it all. "That's my Mama!"

The second standard of performance was 65 of the 80 parents were projected to be actively involved in their children's development of literacy as verified by classroom/school activities reports; Open Activities Calendar reports; show and tell: parent-child presentations; and summaries of parents' teachers', and pupils' questionnaires.

A review of the preceding verifiers revealed that parents had not only visited the school and classrooms - they had also been actively involved. The classrooms' and school's registries showed that parents had accumulated 311 classroom visits, 265 school activities visits, and 145 district-wide visits for a total of 721 visits during the eight month period. Parental growth in the habit of visiting the school and/or classrooms grew rapidly as indicated in the progress summary presented in Table 6.

The school and classroom registries showed that parents actively participated in a variety of activities. These parents (a) assisted children with activities and clothing; (b) chaperoned field trips; (c) checked children's completed activities; (d) collected homework, lunch money, notes, and "show and tell" share items; (e) constructed readiness activities and games; (f) listened to children read, (g) monitored cafeteria during snack and lunch

times; (h) read stories; (i) supervised centers; (j) supervised playground activities; and (k) took attendance.

Table 6
Parental Visitation Progress Summary

| Month | Classrooms | School Activities | District-Wide Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| August | 12 | | 70 |
| September | 29 | 70 | |
| October | 42 | | |
| November | 41 | 35 | |
| December | 48 | 80 | |
| January | 50 | | |
| February | 63 | | |
| March | 26 | 80 | 75 |

Note. Parental visits increased significantly during the months with major holidays. December (Christmas) had 128 visits and March (Easter) had 181 visits.

As parents visited and/or participated in the classroom, they had opportunities to observe how children learn most effectively with activities that were filled with fun, filled with interest, and filled with learning through play. They saw children in action who were approximately the same age as their child. They found that kindergarten-age children were as Peck, McCaig and Sapp (1988) described. They were:

1. active, curious, and eager to learn;
2. increasingly more cooperative and able to develop close friendships;

3. proud to take responsibility for themselves as they learn to tie their shoes, put things away, and control their behavior;

4. eager to please people who matter to them;

5. interested in how they can use words and ideas;

6. curious about nature and how things work; and able to learn best by touching real objects-blocks, pants, puzzles, animals, sand - and by moving around a lot, planning and discussing projects with each other (p. 3).

Information from the Open Activities Calendars revealed that parents were as active at home as they were at school. Parents created opportunities to interact with their children. They talked about things in and around the house. They took short and long trips (walking or in the car) to the amusement park, car wash, church, grocery store, library, mall, playground, service station, sports events, etc. They cooked, cleaned house, and lounged together. They read stories and nursery rhymes and acted them out. They wrote stories and read them. They made and played "sound games" such as games with words starting with the sound of "d" during dinner time. Some practical examples of activities that were utilized were (a) "helped children to notice the changes in the seasons: observed trees, bushes, flowers, leaves, clouds, sun, and moon; (b) called attention to trucks, buses, cars, street signs, lamp posts, fire hydrants, manholes, mailboxes, and telephone posts" (Wells, 1986, p. 76).

According to Peck, McCaig, and Sapp (1988) "children learned from everything they did, whether it was waiting for a bus, modeling with clay, or eating a piece of candy" (p. 5). Fortunately, the practicum children and their parents were involved in and learning from a kindergarten program with an environment "predicated upon what we know about how young children grow and learn, including how they grow and learn to be readers" (Peck, McCaig, & Sapp, 1988, p. 5). Research has provided substantial evidence that effective ways to teach early literacy in kindergarten are:

1. reading and telling stories to children - every day;
2. making lists, charts, and books recording children's plans, ideas, and experiences many times each week;
3. sharing a variety of experiences across all curriculum areas and outside the classroom, pointing out print in the environment as it appears;
4. weaving writing into all activities children do in kindergarten, and reading it to the children; and
5. constantly encouraging children's families to read to their children, or just to enjoy looking at books together (Schickendanz; cited in Peck, McCaig & Sapp, 1988, p. 5).

The show and tell: parent-child presentations pointed out the exceptional job that parents were doing at home with helping their children toward literacy. The three sessions for **The Literacy Share Fair** were rewarding for the parents, teachers, and writer. Seventy-five (25 per

session) parents and their children shared their favorite at-home activities. During their allotted four minute presentations, each parent-child pair showed and told (a) the name of the activity; (b) directions for the activity; (c) the activity; and (d) the benefit(s) they received from doing the activity. Activities shared included (a) match games (letters, words, and/or numbers); (b) identification games (colors, letters, numbers, and/or shapes) ; (c) counting; (d) beginning sounds; (e) rhyming words; (f) following directions; (g) classifying objects; (h) word meaning; (i) likenesses and differences; (k) puzzle completion; (l) listening games; (m) shared reading; and (n) role playing. Parents, teachers, and the writer rated the Literacy Share Fairs as **excellent**.

The Literacy Share Fairs activity also provided one more positive proof, clear demonstration, and/or success story for the research findings that stated (a) children benefit from their parents' active involvement in their learning experiences; (b) parents will participate in ways that they can regardless of their cultural, family, and personal circumstances; and (c) parents will participate when they feel accepted, cared about, and respected (Allen & Freitag, 1988; Barnard, 1989; Epstein, cited in Brandt, 1989; Friedberg, 1989; Greenberg, 1989; Hester, 1989; Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990; Mavrogenes, 1990; Quintero & Huerta-Macias, 1990; Warner, 1991). Additionally, the Literacy Share Fairs activity provided the principal and

staff with a successful activity model in parent involvement to replicate.

Compilation and review of the questionnaires completed by the 80 parents, four teachers, and 80 children at the end of the practicum showed that (a) parent involvement in the school and classroom activities had increased substantially; (b) communication between home and school had increased substantially; (c) most of the parents were involved in their children's learning experiences at home; (d) children's work and self images had improved; (e) the eight month parent training activities were beneficial to the parents, teachers, and children, and (f) this kind of program should be continued next year with implementation throughout the school. The parent training program was unanimously rated successful as reported in the summary of the questionnaires presented in Table 7.

The third standard of performance was the number of parent contacts initiated by each kindergarten teacher was projected to increase by at least 30 as verified by a comparison with the number of teacher initiated contacts done in 1989-90 and the teacher's home communication records.

A review of the four kindergarten teachers' home communication records, Teacher Initiated Home Contact Forms, and the 1989-90 teacher initiated contact records showed that the cumulative number of home contacts made during the eight month practicum period totaled 2,080

Table 7
Summary of Questionnaires

| Factor | Parents | Teachers | Children |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attended ten or more sessions | 38 | 4 | |
| Involved in home/school activities | 75 | 4 | 80 |
| Increased Involvement at home | 77 | 4 | 80 |
| Increased involvement at school | 75 | 4 | 80 |
| Increased home/school communication | 75 | 4 | |
| Improved self-images of children | 80 | 4 | 80 |
| Benefited from program | 80 | 4 | 80 |
| Continued implementation of program | 80 | 4 | 80 |

Note. Number of parents = 80. Number of teachers = 4. Number of children =80.

compared to 800 contacts made during the same eight month period in 1989-90. All of the teachers communicated weekly with their parents. Communication was related to children's work, behavior, monthly progress reports, and home activities. It "supplemented parents' knowledge and provided parenting information, served as a referred source to other agencies, communicated individual children's growth and development, and provided

experiences and methods known to be effective in stimulating and encouraging development" (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987, p. 19).

These four kindergarten teachers had committed themselves to improving parental involvement in their classrooms - in their school. They realized the importance of parents' active participation in their children's education. They knew that promoting parent participation was one of the most important tasks that they had tackled as teachers. However, they were determined to do so. Therefore, they excepted the challenge and joined forces with the writer because they were aware of the lasting effects that parent involvement would have on the educational success of their students.

> Inviting parents as partners in the education of their children presented many interesting possibilities for educational enrichment. Soliciting parent involvement not only opened up lines of communication between home and school, it also provided a vehicle through which parents and educators could work hand-in-hand towards the scholastic success of their youngsters (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990, p. 266).

The fourth standard of performance went hand-in-hand with the third standard. It complemented it. The positive character of communications with the home was projected to increase significantly over the negative character of communications as verified by the comparison with the number

of (positive vs. negative) communications done in 1989-90.

Of the 2,080 contacts, 2,004 were positive and 76 were negative giving positive communication a significant boost. The teachers attributed this increase to the parent training program and their continuous practice of helping to make their parents feel accepted, cared about, and respected. The teachers stated that parents were much more receptive and willing to cooperate. One of the teachers pointed out that "this year, parents seemed to have gone out of their way to help." And according to their records and the writer's observations - they did. A comparison of communications in 1989-90 with communications in 1990-91 was completed and reported in the summary presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Comparison of Communication

| | 1989-90 | | 1990-91 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher | Negative | Positive | Negative | Positive |
| A | 24 | 296 | 16 | 624 |
| B | 22 | 138 | 18 | 622 |
| C | 24 | 136 | 20 | 460 |
| D | 20 | 140 | 22 | 298 |

Note. During the implementation of increased parent involvement in 1990-91, positive communication increased significantly, while negative communication decreased.

Chrispeels (1988) started that home-school partnership activities that focused on communications have been shown to have positive effects on parent, teacher, and student attitude. She pointed out that:

> communication served as the foundation for all other home-school partnership activities. It involved the exchange of information between parents, teachers, and school that helped both school and family assist the child in learning. This exchange of information needed to be done in a variety of ways to increase the opportunity for understanding. Communication was needed from both the classroom teacher and the site administrator to the parent. All parents were contacted on a regular basis. Equally important, the school needed to develop effective communication channels for parents to communicate with teachers and administrators about their child, their hopes, aspirations, and ideas for their child and for the school (p. 20).

The fifth standard of performance was 16 PHS were projected to be conducted as verified by the PHS Calendar, agendas, attendance rosters, listing of community presenters, and a comparison with the 1989-90 PHS.

A review of the preceding activities showed that 16 PHS were successfully conducted from August, 1990 to March, 1991. The PHS were scheduled for two hours (with the provision for parents to select the 9:00

a.m. or the 6:00 p.m. section) twice a month at the practicum school. The average parent attendance was 45 per session. All parents attended some of the sessions with 38 of the 80 parents attending ten or more sessions. Five parents had perfect attendance for the highest rate while five other parents attended only three sessions for the lowest rate.

Agendas ranged from practicum orientation to practicum evaluation (see Report of Action Taken pp. 62-70). The two hour sessions featured a variety of personalities that included a branch librarian, a reading supervisor, a minister, a story teller, four kindergarten teachers, and the writer. Ten of the sessions were presented by the writer.

Parents were given a PHS Calendar at the orientation session, however, notices were sent out the week before each session as reminders (see Appendix M). Attendance was taken at each session. Each teacher checked the attendance roster after each session. Creative notes were sent to parents who were absent. Some examples were:

1. On _____.
   (day, month, date)
   There was an empty space.
   We were so sad, because
   No one else could take your place.

   _____
   Teacher's Signature

2. Boo Hoo! Boo Hoo!
   Everyone was really blue.
   Boo Hoo! Boo Hoo!
   We really missed you.

   _____
   Teacher's Signature

3. This is my story,
   And _____ rhyme.
   (child's name)
   Please come and join us
   At "Parent Help Session" time.

   _____
   Teacher's Signature

Communication for the 1990-91 PHS was as significantly different from communication for 1989-90 as the parent sessions were for the two years. Parent sessions were held quarterly during the 1989-90 school year for a total of four sessions. Those sessions were conducted by the Chapter I parent Service Leader who (along with the other Parent Service Leader) also conducted similar sessions in the other 28 Chapter I schools. Topics for those sessions were (a) Chapter I Services, (b) Reporting to Parents, (c) The New Reading Program, and (d) Tips for Grade One.

The Parent Service Leader actively participated in eight of the 1990-91 PHS. Chapter I also provided most of the materials and supplies. The writer received commendations from the Chapter I Department which stated "In appreciation for rendering the kind of services to parents that Chapter I grows on."

According to Chrispeels (1988) parents and teachers gave basic support to each other. They learned from each other. However, schools provided the structured and professional framework to expand, complement, and support home learning as well as teach children the specific skills of

kindergarten. Parents needed guidance and support on how to foster their child's formal learning at school. In addition, teachers and other school staff members needed to explore ways they could work together with parents as mutual teachers of the child. Teachers found that parents could assist as "teachers" in the classroom, and that teachers could be valuable assistants to parents in their homes by providing learning materials or through home visits (p. 21).

The sixth and last standard of performance was 65 of the 80 parents were projected to become members of the PTA as verified by the PTA membership roster and a comparison with the 1989-90 membership. Documenting the results for this standard was the easiest and the most "fun filled" data collecting experience of all those utilized in this practicum. The kindergarten teachers were the kind of people who made positive things happen. They launched a competitive membership drive among themselves using the following criteria,:

1. Twenty memberships (all of each classroom's parents) would receive a paid-in-full ($20.00) spring field trip of choice sponsored by the "less than 20 memberships" teachers.

2. All less than 20 memberships teachers would plan, develop, and direct the Kindergarten Round-Up scheduled for May.

3. In the event that all four teachers secured 20 memberships (a) the principal, coordinator, counselor, librarian, and writer would sponsor a video show with cokes and popcorn for all kindergarten children and their teachers; (b) the PTA would sponsor the spring field trip; and (c) the kindergarten teachers would share the responsibilities for the Round-Up.

The membership drive was held during the months of September and October, 1990. The teachers mapped out creative campaigns: sending notes, flyers, telephone calls, and trinkets to parents. "Please join" stick-ons and neck pieces were worn home by children. Room "POP-INs" with coffee and juice were held the 15 minutes before school started in the morning and "POP-OUTs" were held the 15 minutes after school ended in the afternoon.

Campaigning was as much fun as it was successful. All of the teachers secured 20 memberships. A review of the 1989-90 P.T.A. membership for parents' of kindergarten children showed that the 80 memberships received in 1990-91 was a 34 membership gain over the 46 memberships received in 1989-90. Membership gains were made in each classroom as reported in the comparison summary presented in Table 9.

The results of the practicum were favorable. A review of the data indicated that the classroom and school visits, classroom and school participation, home tutor activities, PHS, teacher initiated contacts, and

Table 9

Comparison of P.T. A. Memberships

| Classroom | Number of Memberships 1989-90 | 1990-91 |
|---|---|---|
| A | 12 | 20 |
| B | 11 | 20 |
| C | 11 | 20 |
| D | 12 | 20 |

Note. Number of parents per classroom = 20. Each classroom gained a substantial number of memberships in 1990-91. All (80) parents became members.

P.T.A. involvement were positive learning experiences for the children, parents, teachers, and writer. The parent questionnaire also revealed that parents were supportive and enthusiastic about their overall involvement in the practicum. Seventy-one of the 80 parents stated that they (a)" were more involved with their children's education; (b) felt better about the school; (c) were better equipped to help their children; and (d) recommended the program to other parents" (Lueder, 1989, p.16). Parents indicated that the calendar activities, make and take workshops, monthly learning packets, PHS, and teacher contacts helped them help their children. Of 80 parents, 80 benefited from the practicum. Of 80 parents, 75 increased their involvement at school. Of 80 parents, 75 increased their home school

communication. Of 80 parents, 75 reached the projected goal for active involvement in helping their children toward literacy.

## CONCLUSIONS

"Both the school staff and parents had opportunities to increase their knowledge about how to work together. Parents needed information about the school curriculum, school policies, and other aspects of school life as well as opportunities to increase their own parenting skills. Teachers needed opportunities to increase their effectiveness in communicating with parents (including conference skills), in designing effective home learning and homework activities, and in involving parents, when appropriate, in classroom and school activities" (Chrispeels, 1988, p. 21).

The large number of parents from a low socioeconomic area who became actively involved in their children's learning experiences may be surprising to some, but not the writer. The large number indicated that poor parents with low incomes also (a) "wanted their children to succeed; (b) wanted to help them; and (c) needed the school's and the teachers' help to know what to do with their children," (Epstein, cited in Brandt, 1989, p. 27). According to Brandt (1989) "our data suggested that schools would be surprised by how much help parents could be if the parents were given useful, clear information about what they could do, especially at home" (p. 27). This

parent involvement practicum was only as successful as the principal and staff believed it would be. And they strongly believed. They believed that:

1. The happiest and most successful teachers regarded parents as partners and friends.
2. Parents needed to become active agents in their children's care and education.
3. Teachers and parents have much to share and communicate.
4. They could build a successful and mutually satisfying partnership between home and school (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987, p. 19).

Fortunately, "out of a growing awareness of successful practices around the country, a review of the literature, and a formal needs assessment within the school district that brought to light parents' wish that the schools would keep them better informed" (Warner, 1991, p. 372) this kindergarten grade-wide parent involvement practicum program was planned, organized, and implemented. The results were the development of (a) mutual trust and improved parent-teacher relationships; (b) improved self-confidence of parents, teachers, and children; (c) "better parents' understanding of their children's personal development and the school's program, activities and teaching, and learning styles" (Gelfer & Perkins, 1987, p. 19); (d) improved relationship between the parent and child; (e) increased frequency

of parents' involvement in children's learning activities; (f) increased amount of parent contact made with the school; (g) parents as better teachers of their children at home; (h) a tailor-made (to the school and the community) parent involvement framework for future school-wide expansion; and (i) two-way communication that enabled parents to become partners with the school.

> The pressures of parenting and teaching have much in common. Both teachers and parents play a vital role in young children's growth and development. Both create and structure the learning environment in which the child is the central concern. The school and the home need each other and the young child needs both (Gordon, cited in Gelfer & Perkins, 1987, p. 19).

The practicum parents and teachers realized their need for each other. Therefore, they formed a partnership - joining forces and thereby uniting the most important, effective, and long lasting factor in helping their children toward literacy. "All of these children learned and all of their parents helped to make it happen" (Warner, 1991, p. 375).

## Recommendations

The literature significantly indicated that the parent-early childhood partnership was especially critical for children in low-income, disadvantaged

homes. Bronfenbrenner (1974) also supported the position that parental participation was a significant factor in the success of early childhood programs for children from low-income families. Additionally, Powell (1986) pointed out that "with the demonstration of parent education effects on children, parent participation continued to be highly valued as a part of disadvantaged preschool programs" (p. 51). The parent involvement activities implemented in this practicum encouraged parents to provide home environments more responsive to the needs of their children. Realizing such success and progress from an eight month practicum, the writer is excited about the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead for the parents and children of this practicum - of this school.

The writer recommends that this practicum experience be continued in the practicum school and that it also be extended to grades one through five. Additionally, the writer recommends that requests (from other elementary schools in the school system) to replicate this practicum be granted.

## Dissemination

The 51 elementary principals in the writer's school system are aware of the parent involvement program at the practicum school. Approximately 15 of them have requested assistance in implementing a replicate of this

program in their schools. These requests will be granted, where possible.

The writer plans to present an overview of the practicum at the Elementary Departmental/Principals' Association meeting in April. This is time in the school year when the writer assists principals and their faculties in developing plans for the next school year.

A summary report of the practicum will be distributed to the 51 elementary schools in the school system; the Departments of Chapter 1, Curriculum and Instruction: Elementary, Middle School, Secondary, and Special Education; Staff Development; and the 13 branches of the public library. Copies of the practicum report will be placed in the school system's professional library, the main branch of the public library, and the library of the practicum school.

The writer plans to submit proposal applications for presentations at the state reading association convention in December, 1991 and the International Reading Association Convention in May, 1992. The writer also plans to submit articles for publication in the (a) state reading association's journal: The Reader, and (b) the International Reading Association's journal for elementary education: The Reading Teacher.

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# APPENDIX A

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

# PARENTS HELPING SESSION
# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

| | ALWAYS | SOMETIME | NEVER |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Were you read to as a child? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Do you read now for pleasure? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Do you read to your child? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Do you talk leisurely with your child? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you buy books for your child? _____ _____ _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

6. Do you help your child with learning activities at home? _____ _____ _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

7. How often do you do activities with your child? _____ _____ _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

8. Do you like to do activities with your child? _____ _____ _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

9. What do you like about your child's school?

_____

_____

_____

10. What don't you like about your child's school?

_____

_____

_____

11. What are some of the things you do with your child?

_____

_____

_____

12. How can the school help you help your child in school?

_____

_____

_____

13. How often do you visit your child's classroom? _____ _____ _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

14. What activity do you do with your child you like best? _____ _____ _____

Comments: _____

_____

Why? _____

_____

15. Are you a PTA member **YES** _____ **NO** _____

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

**Is there anything that you would like to share?** **YES** _____ **NO** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

# APPENDIX B

## CHAPTER I PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

# CHAPTER 1
# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

Dear Parent,

We are formulating plans for our parent involvement program for the 1990-91 school term. We want our program to be meaningful and enjoyable to our parents. For this reason, we are asking for your input in helping us plan your program. The information you give will be the key to planning successful activities. Let us know your interests, so we can plan activities around those interests.

Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to your child's teacher tomorrow.

1. Are you regularly informed about activities in your child's school?

   ____YES ____ NO

2. Are you interested in activities that you and your child can do together at home?

   ____YES ____ NO

3. Are you interested in meeting with other parents?

   ____ YES ____ NO

4. Check the topics you would like to see discussed in parent meetings:

   _____ Choosing appropriate toys and books for your children

   _____ Improving your child's self-image

   _____ How and when to discipline

   _____ Improving your child's study skills

   _____ How to arrange an effective parent-teacher conference

   _____ Teaching children to be responsible

   _____ How to make instructional games for use at home

   _____ How to turn off the TV

   _____ How to read to your child

   _____ Chapter 1: What's it all about?

(over) 

_____ The elementary reading program: What a parent needs to know (HBJ).

_____ Other. Please list. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Are you interested in serving as a regular classroom or school volunteer?

_____ YES _____ NO

_____ Weekly
_____ Bi-weekly
_____ Monthly

Days you are available M T W Th F
(Circle Choices)
Hours you are available _____

Thank you for your participation.

The Chapter 1 Parental
Involvement Staff

_____
Parent's Signature

_____
Phone Number

SCHOOL _____



**NOTE: Please return to your child's teacher <u>tomorrow.</u>**

# APPENDIX C

## FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION
## BASED ON RAW SCORE FOR EACH GOAL AREA

## Frequency Distribution Based on Raw Scores for Each Goal Area

# GOAL AREAS

| Discrimination of Similarities and Differences | | Comprehension and Concept Formation | | Coordination | | Immediate and Delayed Memory | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Raw score Range | Number of students scoring in Range | Raw score Range | Number of students scoring in Range | Raw score Range | Number of students scoring in Range | Raw score Range | Number of students scoring in Range |
| 0 - 5 | 3 | 0 - 5 | 2 | 0 -3 | 1 | 0 -3 | 3 |
| 6 - 10 | 9 | 6 - 10 | 8 | 4 - 6 | 7 | 4 - 6 | 5 |
| 11 - 15 | 11 | 11 - 15 | 19 | 7 - 9 | 30 | 7 - 9 | 16 |
| 16 - 20 | 19 | 16 - 20 | 18 | 10 - 12 | 34 | 10 - 12 | 21 |
| 21 - 25 | 25 | 21 - 25 | 25 | 13 - 14 | 18 | 13 - 15 | 21 |
| 26 - 30 | 21 | 26 - 30 | 12 | | | 16 - 18 | 17 |
| 31 - 35 | 2 | 31 - 35 | 6 | | | 19 - 21 | 7 |
| 36 - 38 | 0 | 36 - 40 | 0 | | | 22 - 24 | 0 |
| | | 41 - 45 | 0 | | | | |
| | | 46 - 48 | 0 | | | | |

Note. Number of students = 90. Most pupils showed success in the area of coordination. In the areas of Discrimination, Comprehension, and memory, most students are in need of instruction.

# APPENDIX D

# PARENT CONTRACT

# ELEMENTARY NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL
# PARENT CONTRACT

Dear Parents,

_____ Elementary School has developed a "TOGETHERNESS PLAN" to stress academic excellence in our neighborhood school. This goal can be reached easier and faster when parent actions and attitudes reinforce the academic program of the school.

The school needs your support in helping _____ to become a better student. For the benefit of your child, please support the policies and take part in parent-teacher-school activities.

Parents are urged to be present for scheduled parent-teacher conferences.

_____ Principal's Signature

_____ PTA President's Signature

## DISCIPLINE:

Students will conduct themselves in a dignified and orderly manner. Parental cooperation in enforcing the parish and school discipline policies will be required. Parents may be called for conferences regarding their child where disciplinary action is required.

## HOMEWORK:

In addition to regular classroom activities, home activities are to be completed by each student and parent. Parents are expected to provide a quiet place to study and guide/interact/participate in the activities with the student.

## ATTENDANCE:

Students are to comply with the attendance policy set forth by the _____ School Board. Students are to be prompt and regular in attendance. They must being a note form home explaining every absence.

I understand that home-school partnership is vital in reaching academic excellence for my child; therefore, I pledge my full support in descipline, attendance, and homework.

_____ Parent/Guardian's Signature

_____ Date

_____ Teacher's Signature

_____ Date

# APPENDIX E

## PARENT HELPING SESSIONS TOPICS CHECKLIST: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

# PARENT HELPING SESSIONS TOPICS CHECKLIST: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

At each helping session, parents will be involved in the learning and sharing of ideas, procedures, and techniques for dealing with situations and problems that confront their children in today's schools. All topics will be designed to meet the needs of kindergarten parents.

Which topics would be most helpful to you as a parent in helping your children and improving their learning?

Choose in the order of your preference three (3) topics for the next three (3) clinics. Mark beside your choices 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

____ The Public Library

____ Basic Skills Program

____ New Reading Program (HBJ)

____ Read-Aloud and Literacy

____ Whole Language Approach

____ How Parents Can Help at Home

____ Parent Teacher Conferences

____ Make and Take

____ Volunteer Program

____ _____

_____

_____

(others)

# APPENDIX F

# ACTIVITIES CALENDARS

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July 1990<br>S M T W T F S<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7<br>8 9 10 11 12 13 14<br>15 16 17 18 19 20 21<br>22 23 24 25 26 27 28<br>29 30 31 | September 1990<br>S M T W T F S<br>1<br>2 3 4 5 6 7 8<br>9 10 11 12 13 14 15<br>16 17 18 19 20 21 22<br>23 24 25 26 27 28 29<br>30 | | 1 | Help your child learn the names and uses of different tools, such as hammer, saw, pliers<br>2 | 3 | Take your child to a concert in the park<br>4 |
| Have a Hat Day everyone wear a favorite or funny hat<br>5 | 6 | Foods that may cause allergy cocoa, egg whites, chocolate, wheat<br>7 | 8 | 9 | Ask your child to name objects that move when the wind blows, such as trees, leaves and flags<br>10 | 11 |
| 12 | Read a favorite story from Mother Goose<br>13 | 14 | Remember, you are your child's most important teacher<br>15 | 16 | 17 | Go to a garage sale Let your child buy something<br>18 |
| Time to go fishing<br>19 | 20 | Get the crayons and coloring book and color together<br>21 | 22 | Explain a saying, such as "Birds of a feather flock together"<br>23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | Take an evening walk together in your neighborhood Take time to look at and listen to things your child may see and hear such as airplane lights moonlight crickets and bullfrogs<br>27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | Look for falling stars on a clear evening<br>31 | |





# August 1990

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July 1990<br>S M T W T F S<br>1 2 3 4 5 6 7<br>8 9 10 11 12 13 14<br>15 16 17 18 19 20 21<br>22 23 24 25 26 27 28<br>29 30 31 | September 1990<br>S M T W T F S<br>1<br>2 3 4 5 6 7 8<br>9 10 11 12 13 14 15<br>16 17 18 19 20 21 22<br>23 24 25 26 27 28 29<br>30 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |





OPEN ACTIVITIES'
CALENDAR



# AUGUST 1990

# APPENDIX G

## VISITORS' SIGN-IN SHEET

# _____ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VISITORS' SIGN-IN SHEET

| Visitor | Date | Purpose | Time In | Time Out |
|---|---|---|---|---|
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# APPENDIX H

# CLASSROOM REGISTRY

_____

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM VISTORS' REGISTRY

ROOM _____ TEACHER _____

| Visitor | Date | Purpose of Visit |
|---|---|---|
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# APPENDIX I

## TEACHER INITIATED HOME CONTACT FORM

# _____ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER INITIATED HOME CONTACT FORM (keep a random sampling of written contacts on file. Submit completed form to principal on the last day of each month).

Teacher _____ Room _____

Grade _____ Month _____

**Written Home Contacts**

| Date | Positive | Negative |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
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| | | |
| | | |
| **Total** | | |

## Verbal Home Contacts

| Date | Positive | Negative |
|---|---|---|
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| Total | | |

# APPENDIX J

## PARENT SESSION ATTENDANCE ROSTER

_____ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT HELP SESSION (PHS)

_____
(Date)

_____
(Time)

Topic: _____

_____

## ATTENDANCE ROSTER

**Please sign your name below as a record of your attendance at this Parent Help Session. Thank You.**

| | |
|---|---|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

# APPENDIX K

# QUESTIONNAIRES

_____ **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
**PARENT HELP SESSIONS**
**PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**DIRECTIONS:** Please give us your opinion about the Parent Help Sessions that you have just completed. Your answers will help in the evaluation of the program and in further planning for our parent programs. Thank you for sharing your opinions.

Please circle **YES** or **NO** to answer each question.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I attended ten or more of the sessions. | Yes | No |
| 2. | The topics were helpful in helping me help my child. | Yes | No |
| 3. | The leaders directions were easy to follow. | Yes | No |
| 4. | I tried some of the activities at home with my child. | Yes | No |
| 5. | My child enjoyed doing the activities with me. | Yes | No |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | I enjoyed doing the activities with my child. | Yes | No |
| 7. | We will continue doing many of the activities at home. | Yes | No |
| 8. | I also helped with other activities at the school. | Yes | No |
| 9. | I would recommend this kind of program to other parents. | Yes | No |
| 10. | This kind of program should be continued next year. | Yes | No |

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Elementary School

# Parent Help Sessions
# Teacher Questionnaire

**Directions:** Please give us your opinion about the Parent Help Sessions that have just been completed. Your answers will help in the evaluation of the program and in further planning for other parent programs. Thank you for sharing your opinion.

Please circle **Yes** or **No** to answer each question.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I attended ten or more of the session. If no, how many? __ | Yes | No |
| 2. | The topics were helpful to me as well as the parents. | Yes | No |
| 3. | The leaders were knowledgeable about their topics. | Yes | No |
| 4. | The topics were meaningful and correlated well with classroom activities. | Yes | No |
| 5. | My class had good parent participation in the training. | Yes | No |
| 6. | More of my parents visit and help in the classroom. | Yes | No |
| 7. | I value the support that parents are providing me and their children. | Yes | No |
| 8. | Parents are helping their children more at home. | Yes | No |
| 9. | Home-school communication has improved. | Yes | No |
| 10. | My students' work and self-images have improved. | Yes | No |
| 11. | My ability to work with parents has improved. | Yes | No |
| 12. | More of my parents are involved in activities around the school. | Yes | No |
| 13. | More of my parents are PTA members. | Yes | No |
| 14. | This kind of parent program should be continued next year. | Yes | No |
| 15. | This kind of parent program should be implemented throughout the school. | Yes | No |

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

# _____ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT HELP SESSIONS STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions for the teacher: Explain to the children that this is an activity to find out their feelings about home and school work that they do with their parents. Read the sample question and let them practice marking X on the smiling face if their answer is YES or X on the sad face if their answer is NO. Read each question and allow time for the students to answer by marking X on their choice.

SAMPLE Question:

I am in the Kindergarten.

1. I like for someone to read to me.

2. Someone reads to me at home.

3. Sometimes I choose the story to be read.

4. We talk about the story.

5. We play other reading games at home.

6. Someone helps me write at home.

7. We talk about things in our house.

8. Sometimes we name things in our house.

9. I read by myself at home sometimes.

10. I like to read and talk and write.

# APPENDIX L

# CERTIFICATE OF INVOLVEMENT

_____ Elementary School

# CERTIFICATE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Awarded to

_____

**In recognition of**

*Active participation in the Parent Help Sessions, Literacy Share Fairs, Parent Teacher Association, home tutoring, and other classroom/school activities that helped*

_____ *in* _____ *development of literacy*
(child's name) (his/her)

*Presented this* _____ *day of April, 1991 at* _____ *Elementary School*

_____ _____
Principal Teacher

_____
Director of Elementary Education

# APPENDIX M

# NOTICE FOR PARENT HELP SESSIONS

# CALLING

# ALL KINDERGARTEN PARENTS

# TO

# PARENT TRAINING SESSION

Especially for

_____ ELEMENTARY

# COME!
# LEARN ABOUT THE

_____
(TOPIC)

Tuesday, _____ 199___
(Two Sessions)

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

WHAT TIME WILL YOU COME?
CHOOSE ONE:

YOUR NAME:_____

CHILD'S NAME:_____

_____9:00 A.M. _____6:00 P.M.

DETACH AND RETURN TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER